MICHAEL CLAYTON

by

Tony Gilroy

WHITE PRODUCTION DRAFT
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1 INT. KENNER BACH & LEDEEN/VARIOUS SHOTS -- NIGHT 1

It's 2:00 a.m. in a major New York law firm. Ten floors of office space in the heart of the Sixth Avenue Canyon. Seven hours from now this place will be vibrating with the beehive energy of six hundred attorneys and their attendant staff, but for the moment it is a vast, empty, half-lit shell. A SERIES OF SHOTS emphasizing the size and power of this organization; shots that build quietly to the idea that *somewhere* here -- somewhere in this building -- there's something very important going on. MUSIC and CREDITS already mixing with the crazed, manic, express train chatter of --

ARTHUR EDENS (V.O.)
...Michael. Dear, Michael. Nurse Michael. Dr. Clayton. Secret Hero. Keeper of the Hidden Sins. Of course it's you. Who else could they send? Who else could be trusted? Smoke on the horizon -- hole in the bucket -- voices crying from Milwaukee to Manhattan, "Where's our hero?" "Where's our Cleanser Of The Hidden Sins?" And here you are, sleeves rolled up, lips sealed -- broom -- dustbin -- bankroll at the ready! Fifties, is it still fifties? When you came to Boston, you remember? God, you must've had a thousand of them! The cash -- the smile -- the quiet word in the corner -- of course it's you, Michael, who else could it ever be? But Michael, please, before you sweep, please just hear me out -- just try -- because it's not like Boston -- it's not an episode -- relapse -- fuck up -- I'm begging you, Michael, make believe it's not just madness, because it's not just madness --
(continuing, as--)

2 INT. LAW FIRM OFFICE/DUPLICATION CENTER -- NIGHT 2

A XEROX MACHINE -- cranking out high-speed copies -- ten pages a second flashing before our eyes -- all information a blur except for the letterhead which is constant:

KENNER, BACH & LEDEEN LLP
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

As...

ARTHUR EDENS (V.O.)
-- I mean, yes -- okay, yes -- elements of madness -- the speed of madness -- yes, the occasional, euphoric, pseudo-hallucinatory moments that, yes -- fine -- agreed -- distracting -- nostalgic -- all of that --
(continuing, as--)

3 *A HUGE EMPTY OFFICE BULLPEN. CUBICLES AND WORKSTATIONS.* 3

ARTHUR EDENS (V.O.)
-- but that's just the package -- the plate -- think of it as a tax -- The Mania Tax -- The Insanity Tax -- or like advertising on TV -- it's the freight -- the weight -- it's the price of the show --

4 *A LONG, DARK CORRIDOR. A CLEANING CREW IN THE DISTANCE.* 4

ARTHUR EDENS (V.O.)
-- just please, just hear me out, Michael, because I swear to you, this is so much, so very much more, than the ravings of some hypo-maniacal, bipolar attorney --

5 *DOCUMENT AREA. ODD THIS LATE. THREE ASSOCIATES STACKING PAPERWORK ONTO A TROLLEY --* 5

ARTHUR EDENS (V.O.)
-- Two weeks ago I came out of the building -- I'm running across Sixth Avenue -- there's a car waiting -- I have exactly thirty-eight minutes to get to Laguardia,and I'm dictating -- there's this frantic associate running to keep up --

6 *A SENIOR PARTNER'S OFFICE. A SECURITY GUARD SNEAKING A SMOKE IN THE DARK BY AN OPEN WINDOW.* 6

ARTHUR EDENS (V.O.)
-- we're in the middle of the street -- the light changes -- the traffic -- unleashed -- it's coming -- serious traffic -- but there I am -- I'm babbling -- my mouth -- I can't stop -- some ridiculous, involuntary part of my brain just keeps going -- I'm standing there dictating this trade secret, Motion to Suppress...

7 *AN OFFICE PHONE. TWELVE LINES BLINKING IN THE DARK.* 7

ARTHUR EDENS (V.O.)
...and there, Michael, in the middle of Sixth Avenue -- as I stood there jabbering -- and this poor young woman is screaming -- traffic speeding toward us -- I looked at my hands and my suit -- my briefcase -- and it came to me -- came over me -- through me -- the overwhelming sensation -- the feeling -- the fact -- that I was covered with some sort of film -- an oil -- an ooze -- my hair -- my face -- like a glaze -- a coating -- and at first I thought, "My God, I know what this is, this is some sort of amniotic, embryonic fluid -- I'm drenched in afterbirth -- I've breached the chrysalis -- I've been reborn." --

8 *ASSOCIATE #1 WHEELING THAT DOCUMENT TROLLEY PAST AN EMPTY BACK OFFICE KITCHEN.* 8

ARTHUR EDENS (V.O.)
-- but the traffic -- this stampede -- cars -- trucks -- the horns -- the screaming associate -- I'm thinking, "No -- reset -- this cannot be rebirth. If anything, this must some giddy illusion of renewal that happens in the final instant before death." --

9 *A MAINTENANCE WORKER VACUUMING A LARGE RECEPTION STAIRCASE.* 9

ARTHUR EDENS (V.O.)
-- and then -- in the fraction of a moment it took for that idea to form -- I realized all of that was wrong, because I looked back at the building and had the most stunning moment of clarity...

10 *THE WORD PROCESSING DEPARTMENT. TWENTY PEOPLE -- ACTORS, DANCERS, ARTISTS, INSOMNIACS -- THE GRAVEYARD SHIFT HAMMERING OUT OVERNIGHT LEGAL PAPERWORK.* 10

ARTHUR EDENS (V.O.)
...I realized, Michael, at that moment, that I had emerged -- as I have done nearly every day for the past twenty-six years of my life -- not through doors of Kenner, Bach & Ledeen --

11 *RECEPTION LOBBY. ASSOCIATE #1 WHEELING THE TROLLEY OFF THE ELEVATOR.* 11

ARTHUR EDENS (V.O.)
-- not through the portals of our huge and powerful law firm, but rather from the asshole of an organism whose sole function is to excrete the poison -- the ammo -- the defoliant -- necessary for even larger and more dangerous organisms to destroy the miracle of humanity --

12 *ANOTHER EMPTY HALLWAY. A BANQUET TABLE LITTERED WITH THE PICKED-OVER REMNANTS OF AN ALL-NIGHT CATERED FEED.* 12

ARTHUR EDENS (V.O.)
-- and that I have been coated with this patina of shit for the better part of my life and that the stink and stain might in all likelihood take the rest of my days to undo --

13 *AND NOW -- WIDER TO FIND -- ASSOCIATE #1 WHEELING THE TROLLEY TOWARD BIG DOORS AT THE END OF THE HALL --* 13

ARTHUR EDEN'S (V.O.)
-- and do you know what I did next? I took a deep, cleansing breath. I set that notion aside. I tabled it. I said to myself, "As clear as this may be -- as potent as this may feel -- as true a thing as I believe I have witnessed here -- I must wait. It must stand the test of time."

AN ATTORNEY HUDDLED OVER HIS MOBILE PHONE, SEEING THE KID COMING, HELPING HIM BY OPENING THE DOORS, as --

ARTHUR EDENS (V.O.)
And, Michael, the time is now.

14 INT. LAW FIRM CONFERENCE ROOM -- NIGHT 14

The big room. Bright. Teeming. FORTY PEOPLE jamming an all-night deadline: ATTORNEYS -- PARTNERS AND ASSOCIATES -- PARALEGALS -- ASSISTANTS -- ACCOUNTANTS -- working groups bunkered around a huge table covered with paperwork and laptops and coffee mugs. Several document "villages" piled around the room. The credits have wrapped. Arthur Edens has stopped talking. And if there's music, that's stopped too. We're live.

BARRY GRISSOM coming around the table. He's maybe fifty. A killer New York lawyer in his prime. Litigator. Senior partner. Always wrapped a little tight and this moment is no exception -- slowing now and...

BARRY
(kneeling, whispering)
I've got that cunt from the Wall Street Journal on line eight. I told her you were in Bermuda, but I'd try to patch you in...

MARTY BACH looks up from his papers. He's seventy. It's his name on the door. Big power. Sweet eyes. A thousand neckties. A velvet switchblade.

MARTY
(punching up line eight)
Marty Bach. How can I help you?

REPORTER (PHONE/OVER)
"Marty, hi, it's Bridget Klein. Look, we're going with a story tomorrow about a settlement in the U/North defoliant case. You want to comment?"

MARTY
The case you're referring to, is now, as it has been for the past six years, pending and unresolved. Until our client has their day in court or the plaintiffs come to their senses and drop the suit, I'll have nothing of value to tell you.

BARRY kneeling there, hanging on every word --

REPORTER (PHONE/OVER)
"Come on, Marty, Barry's telling me you're off at some conference. I know for a fact you're in the office right now with like six hundred people trying to push this thing through."

MARTY
Here's what I know: your deadline was twenty minutes ago, so either you're fishing for a story or trying to get out of writing a retraction. In either case, I wish you well...best of luck...
(as he hangs up--)
...sweet dreams.

BARRY
So?

MARTY
(scanning the room)
Where the fuck is Karen Bauer?

15 INT. LAW FIRM LADIES ROOM -- NIGHT 15

A CORPORATE LOGO -- embossed on a high-quality, Kevlar, travel tote:

u/north

"we grow your world together"

THE U/NORTH BAG on a shelf above a row of sinks. Water running. But no one there. Stalls in the mirror and --

15A INT. LADIES ROOM STALL -- NIGHT 15A

KAREN BAUER sitting fully dressed on the john. She is Senior In-House Counsel for the largest agricultural/chemical supply manufacturer on the planet. She is hiding here. She is trying to fight off a panic attack using a breathing exercise she read about in an airline magazine. As we hear:

ARTHUR EDENS (V.O.)
...even this, Michael -- even now -- that you're here -- there's a reason, a reason it's you -- every reason -- surely you can sense that -- how it pulls together -- how it gathers -- Nurse Michael -- Secret Hero -- Keeper of the Hidden Sins -- tell me you can see that, Michael, for God's sake...

16 INT. CHINATOWN CARD ROOM -- NIGHT 16

MICHAEL CLAYTON'S FACE -- A PHOTOGRAPH laminated onto a Kenner, Bach & Ledeen ID card -- FILLS OUR FRAME. It's a man's face. Son of a second-generation cop's face. Father of a ten-year-old boy's face. A face women like more than they know why. The good soldier's face. THE ID CARD just one of several objects sitting at the bottom of a shitty plastic basket. Also here: one roll of breath mints, two mobile phones, business cards, too many keys on a Lexus security pendant keychain, and one heavy-duty steel Rolex.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

THREE OTHER BASKETS ON THE TABLE. Three other sets of personal objects. A SMALL HOLSTERED GUN in one of the collections. A stack of empty baskets to the side.

WE'RE IN

A CHINATOWN CASINO. A basement hideaway on a dead night. TWO BORED CHINESE BOUNCERS sitting with the plastic baskets beside a walk-through metal detector. Only one of the room's ten tables is lit tonight. In the background, a Cantonese Announcer calling the first race at Happy Valley and --

MICHAEL CLAYTON glancing at his hole card. And the eyes are weary tonight. Not as fresh as that ID photo.

MICHAEL
Check.

THE DEALER is Chinese and all business -- looking to --

PLAYER #2
(Dominican dude)
I go like that. Check.

PLAYER #3 has a bad toupee and a plumber's flashroll --

PLAYER #3/PLUMBER
(peeling off twenties)
Two hundred.

PLAYER #4, a Chinese landlord -- already pushing his cards away -- he's folding --

DEALER
(back to Michael)
Two hundred to you.

MICHAEL shakes his head. He's out. PLAYER #2 right behind him. THE DEALER starts gathering cards for the next hand.

PLUMBER
You don't remember me, huh?
(to Michael as he rakes in the pot--)
We played a couple times that lamp place. On Bowery. That guy's showroom. All the lamps and shit?

MICHAEL
Galaxy.

PLUMBER
That's it. You had a restaurant you opened, right? On Franklin? Cause my old partner bid that job, the plumbing. You don't remember me?

MICHAEL
I remember.

PLUMBER
I lost a lot of weight since then.

MICHAEL
You bought some hair.

PLUMBER
Yeah, with your money.

MICHAEL just antes. The others follow.

PLUMBER
So your bar, what happened? Just had to be in show biz, right?

PLAYER #2
Shit, man...
(getting cranky)
I want to listen to Larry King, I'll go home and put the fucking TV on.

PLUMBER
(just ignoring him)
Cause that was a good location.

MICHAEL
Yeah, that's what my partner kept telling me.

Cards coming out as we --

ANGLE ON

THE BASKET WITH MICHAEL'S STUFF. THE PAGER starts vibrating. A moment later, THE CELL PHONE starts ringing and --

17 INT. CHINATOWN FREIGHT ELEVATOR -- NIGHT 17

Ascending. MICHAEL leaving in a hurry. Strapping on his Rolex, trying to read the pager and --

18 EXT. DOYERS ST. -- NIGHT 18

Late. Cold. Quiet. A BLACK LEXUS comes alive -- lights flashing as the alarm disables and --

MICHAEL (OS)
-- is he drunk?

MALE VOICE (PHONE/OVER)
(nervous, hyper)
"-- no, that's the first thing I asked him -- no, he's sober --"

MICHAEL coming up the street, juggling a remote security pendant and A CELL PHONE --

MICHAEL
-- tell him to stay off the phone --

MALE VOICE (PHONE/OVER)
"-- so, Michael, I mean, you're on it now, right? Because this guy, he's a huge client -- this is half my book, this guy, okay?"

MICHAEL
I'm walking to my car.

MALE VOICE (PHONE/OVER)
"Let me give you my number in Bermuda, I gotta call him right back and let him know you're on the way."

19 EXT. WEST SIDE HIGHWAY -- NIGHT 19

THE LEXUS speeding North.

20 INT. THE LEXUS -- NIGHT (CONT) 20

MICHAEL trying to drive and mess with the GPS UNIT on his dashboard. Something's wrong with it. He's tapping on it and THE SCREEN is flickering on and off -- finally, fuck it -- he slaps the GPS away -- steps on the gas and --

21 EXT. WEST SIDE HIGHWAY -- NIGHT (CONT) 21

THE LEXUS racing toward the George Washington bridge.

22 EXT. WESTCHESTER MANSION -- NIGHT 22

THE LEXUS pulling up the long dark driveway.

23 INT. MANSION GARAGE -- NIGHT 23

THE DAMAGED FRONT BODY PANEL OF A MERCEDES. Dented in. MICHAEL'S HAND -- his pen -- examining the freshly-chipped paint, until --

MICHAEL stands. We see him now. The Mercedes just one of half-a-dozen luxury vehicles lined up here in this bright oversized garage.

24 INT. MANSION KITCHEN -- NIGHT 24

Mega kitchen. The scale and taste of real wealth.

MR. GREER
(pacing)
What they did, you see, they changed the grade there. They widened the street, I'm sure someone told them they were making an improvement...

MICHAEL on a stool at the island. MRS. GREER standing by herself. Nightgown pulled tight. Her second tumbler of Scotch.

MR. GREER
(weirdly serene)
But now, you see, when it rains? With this new angle, and they put these new these sodium lamps -- it's blinding, that turn there. Just blinding.

MICHAEL
They'll have to take a look at that.

MR. GREER
And this, it's not just tonight. I've been saying this for years.
(to his wife)
How many times have we talked about that corner? Dell?

MRS. GREER silent. Just numb.

MICHAEL
Mr. Greer, we don't have a great deal of time to work with here.

MR. GREER's anxiety sharpening. Arrogance under siege.

MR. GREER
So the circumstances, road conditions, none of this holds any interest for you?

MICHAEL
What interests me right now is finding the strongest criminal attorney that can get here in the next fifteen minutes.

MR. GREER
(bristling)
Well, that sounds ominous...

MICHAEL
We have some good relationships up here in Westchester.

MR. GREER
So what are you? You're not a lawyer?

MICHAEL
Not the kind you need.

MR. GREER
What kind is that?

MICHAEL
You need a trial lawyer. Someone to see this all the way through. That's not what I do.

There it is. And MR. GREER doesn't like it one bit.

MR. GREER
I think we're gonna need to pull Walter back in on this.
(like it's some kind of business meeting)
I want to get him back on the phone, get him into the mix. Because, I'll be frank, I'm not sure I like the way this is going.

MICHAEL
Sir...
(cut the crap)
We don't have time for Walter. Your options here, they're gonna get smaller very quickly.

MR. GREER
What options? I'm not hearing any options.

MICHAEL
I'm suggesting you go local. I'm telling you there's several people up here I like for this.

MR. GREER
And that's it? That's what you've got?
(to his wife)
You believe this?
(incredulous)
I've been a client at Kenner, Bach for twelve years! You think I pay that retainer every month for a place at the back of the line?

MICHAEL
Mr. Greer, you left the scene of an accident on a slow weeknight, six miles from the State Police barracks. Believe me, if there's a line, you're right up front.

MR. GREER
I can get a lawyer any time I want! You think I need you for that? You think we're sitting here forty-five minutes waiting for a goddam referral?

MICHAEL
Look, I don't know what Walter promised you, but whatever it w--

MR. GREER
"Miracle Worker."
(cutting him off)
That's a direct quote. That's Walter twenty minutes ago, okay? "Hang tight, I'm sending you a miracle worker!"

MICHAEL
Well, he misspoke.

MR. GREER
About what? That you're the firm's fixer? Or that you're any good at it?

MRS. GREER
Elliot...

MR. GREER
This guy was running in the street!
(losing it)
You add the lights -- blinding rain -- the angle -- what kind of person's out running in the street in the rain at midnight? Answer me th--
(stopping instantly, as--)

GLASS SHATTERS! -- MRS. GREER just hurled her highball into the sink. Staring at her husband. Silence, until --

MR. GREER
What if someone had stolen the car? Happens all the time.
(dead air)
Hypothetically...

This awful pause. MICHAEL wielding the silence like a club.

MICHAEL
Cops like hit and run cases. They work them hard and they clear them fast. Right now, there's a BCI unit picking paint chips off a guardrail. Tomorrow morning they're gonna be looking for the owner of a custom-color, hand-rubbed, green Mercedes SL 500. This guy you hit, if he got a look at the plate, it won't even take that long.

Like that -- THE PHONE RINGS -- harsh -- sudden --

MRS. GREER
...omigod...

MICHAEL
(ignoring the phone)
There's no play here. There's no angle. There's no champagne room. And I'm not a miracle worker, I'm a janitor. So the math on this is simple: the smaller the mess, the easier it is for me to clean up.

THE PHONE STILL RINGING and --

MR. GREER
(small now)
It's the police, isn't it?

MICHAEL
No. They don't call.
(calmly picking up--)
Hello?
(beat)
Jerry. Hey, it's Michael...
(pause)
Yeah, sorry. I'm in the neighborhood.
You got a pen?

MICHAEL on hold. Silence now. MR. AND MRS. GREER parked like glaciers. Broken glass in the sink.

25 EXT. WESTCHESTER MANSION DRIVEWAY -- NIGHT 25

One hour later. MICHAEL leaning against the Lexus, munching on a loaf of stale French bread. Looking over, as JERRY DANTE, local criminal attorney, comes out of the house --

JERRY
He's changing his shirt...
(pulling a cigarette)
I talked to my guy at the State Police barracks. Better we go over there and surrender and they can tell the town cops to kiss off.
(lighting up)
This kid he hit, he's a waiter at one of those clubs along the strip there. He's stable. I guess they're putting some pins in his hip. Good news is he got busted selling pot last year, so we got something to work with anyway.

MICHAEL
You don't need me for this, right?

JERRY
Couldn't hurt.

MICHAEL
(pulling his keys)
I'll have somebody call you.

JERRY nods. Okay. But lingering a moment, because --

JERRY
So, Michael, look, I was thinking of you last week. My cousin Frank, from Brooklyn Kings, right? He's out in Nassau now. They got an opening on the probate bench. He's kind of going for it.

MICHAEL
That's a tough crowd.

JERRY
No shit. Can I have him call you?

MICHAEL
Sure.

JERRY
And don't worry about this...
(re: Mr. Greer)
I'll put my back into it.

MICHAEL nods. Heading for the car and --

26 EXT. MANSION DRIVEWAY/COUNTRY ROAD -- NIGHT 26

THE LEXUS speeding away from the house --

27 INT. THE LEXUS -- NIGHT 27

MICHAEL driving. Escaping. Running from more than Mr. Greer and Jerry Dante. More than just a bad night boiling behind his eyes. Driving hard and wild. Turning suddenly and --

28 EXT. WESTCHESTER COUNTRY ROAD -- NIGHT 28

THE LEXUS racing along.

29 INT. THE LEXUS -- NIGHT/PRE-DAWN 29

MICHAEL -- turning again -- aimless -- windows open -- cold air whipping through -- braking suddenly -- impulsive -- turning -- suddenly -- faster now and --

30 EXT. NEW COUNTRY ROAD -- PRE-DAWN 30

First light. A smaller road. THE LEXUS speeding past large estates tucked back in the fog and deep woods.

31 EXT. THE FIELD -- DAWN 31

A HUGE OPEN PASTURE. Surrounded by forest. The sun just starting to rise. Cold mist hanging over the whole valley. Nothing but gray and green. Stark. Perfect.

THE LEXUS speeding toward us -- climbing around the turn -- eating up the valley road that runs along the pasture -- but suddenly the car is slowing -- braking hard and --

32 INT. THE LEXUS -- DAWN 32

MICHAEL pulling to a stop. Staring out the window.

33 EXT. THE FIELD -- DAWN 33

MICHAEL getting out of the car. Standing there.

THREE HORSES poised at the crest of the pasture. Hanging there in the fog like ghosts.

MICHAEL jumping the fence. Walking slowly into the field. Behind him, the Lexus with the engine running.

THE HORSES aware of him now. Watching him come.

MICHAEL'S FACE as he walks. And later on we'll understand all the forces roiling inside him, but for the moment, the simplest thing to say is that this is a man who needs more than anything to see one pure, natural thing, and by some miracle has found his way to this place. The wet grass and cold air and no coat -- none of it makes any difference to him right now -- he's a pilgrim stumbling into the cathedral.

And he stops. Just standing there. Empty. Open. Lost.

Nothing but the field and the fog and the woods beyond.

THE HORSES staring at him.

MICHAEL staring back. And just like that...

THE LEXUS EXPLODES!

THE HORSES already running before MICHAEL can turn back -- pieces of the car that have been blown into the sky still raining down before he's fully grasped what's happening --

MICHAEL simply shocked. Senseless. Standing there frozen. Stunned. The car -- his car -- is gone -- replaced by a skeletal shell of fire -- smoke pluming -- little follow-up explosions popping every couple seconds. MICHAEL looks around. Looks back. He should be dead. He is not.

And now, as the reality of that sinks in, as the smell of burning car finally reaches him, we can see the confusion drain away. All that staggered chaos in Michael's eyes suddenly replaced with steel. He should be dead. He is not.

And now he's walking. Toward the car.

Walking faster. Determined. And suddenly he's running -- running *toward* the fire.

He's jumping the fence. Making sure that no one's coming. Wiping away at the smoke to get close. Recoiling as another little explosion fuels the flames and --

He's throwing things into the burning frame of the car!

The Rolex. His cell phone. His belt. His shoes. A ring. Throwing in anything that might survive the fire and --

He's done all that. And now he's running. Off toward the woods. Barefeet.

Disappearing like madman into the fog as we --

FADE TO BLACK

FOUR DAYS EARLIER

FADE IN ON

34 INT. HENRY CLAYTON'S BEDROOM -- DAY 34

A COMPUTER MONITOR. A screen saver. Dragon-Slaying Wizards, Orcs, Nordic Elves, Samurai Gnomes -- all spinning across the monitor in perpetual slow motion. And every few seconds these words appear:

REALM & CONQUEST

WIDER TO REVEAL

The small room of a typical pre-war West End apartment. Loft bed. Parquet floor. Paint-chipped radiator. All of this subsidiary, however to the room's overwhelming decorative theme: Fantasy. Books, games, posters, models -- hundreds of mythical lands, creatures, weapons and journeys are stacked, pinned, piled and catalogued everywhere.

HENRY CLAYTON is ten -- small for ten -- all bones and intelligence. He's hustling around, stuffing things into his already bulging backpack -- rushing off, taking us with him into --

35 INT. WEST END HALLWAY/KITCHEN -- DAY 35

HENRY scrambling through a hallway clogged with books and bookshelves -- a clutter of intellectual/domestic funk -- bringing us quickly to the kitchen and IVY, Michael's ex-wife. She is 38. Her youthful beauty perhaps a bit too delicate for life's perpetual harassments. GERALD was Ivy's doctoral history professor, now he's her second husband. He's feeding SOPHIA, their eighteen-month old daughter.

HENRY
(blowing through--)
Is my other deck in here?

IVY
Did you eat?

HENRY
(scrounging around)
Dad's down there waiting already.

GERALD
There were cards in our bathroom.

HENRY
(Ivy staring at him)
Yes. I had a waffle.

IVY
Since we're out of waffles I don't see how that's possible.

HENRY
(rushing off)
It's a miracle.

IVY about to fire back. GERALD waving her off. Let it go. Feed the baby. Save your strength.

36 EXT. WEST END AVENUE - DAY 36

MICHAEL on the street, leaning against the Lexus. He's wearing a good suit and tie. He's flipping through The Post. Looking up as HENRY exits the building and --

37 EXT. BROADWAY/UPPER WEST SIDE -- DAY 37

THE LEXUS driving through morning traffic, as we hear --

HENRY (V.O.)
...so no one's even sure exactly where they are because there's no border or landmarks or anything...

38 INT. THE LEXUS -- DAY (CONT) 38

MICHAEL driving. HENRY shotgun.

HENRY
...and the town, it's not even a town, really, it's just like this camp where these people have gathered to hide, right? All these deserters and guys
(MORE)

HENRY (cont'd)
that got cut off from their armies, all these people that were hiding in the woods and trying to stay alive, this is where they all came. There's Thieves, Gray Mages, Unbidden Warriors, Dark Avians, Riverwynders, Sappers -- there's like fifteen kinds of characters, okay?

MICHAEL
Okay.

MICHAEL fighting distraction. HENRY so eager and serious.

HENRY
So basically you have all these characters who don't know each other and they don't know why they're here and nobody has any alliances, okay? Whatever alliances you had before are gone. You can't even say who you are, because you don't know, maybe the person you're talking to, maybe they were like your mortal enemy in the wars. So it's just completely like everybody for themselves.

MICHAEL
Sounds familiar.

HENRY
It's really good. I'm serious. You should really read it.

MICHAEL
Right. And by the time I finish it you're gonna be onto something else.

HENRY
How much you want to bet?

MICHAEL
I don't know. How much you got?

MICHAEL glances over. The boy just aching with sweetness.

HENRY
It's not just the deck and legend books, it's a massive player online RPG and they're gonna do gaming figures too. They worked on this for like six years.

But they're here. MICHAEL pulling over to the curb behind a couple school vans.

MICHAEL
Bus pass?

HENRY
It's in my locker.
(pissed)
You're not even gonna look at it, are you?

MICHAEL
What? The book? Bring it Saturday.

HENRY
I did already. I left it in your kitchen. It's got a red cover.

MICHAEL
Go.
(snagging a quick kiss on the boy's head--)
Go on. Teach these people something.

HENRY getting out of the car. MICHAEL watching his son lug his backpack down the sidewalk and into the school. MICHAEL holding a smile, ready with a final wave goodbye. And then the boy is gone and the mask comes down. Checking his watch -- he's late and tense and dropping the car into gear, as --

39 EXT. "TIM'S" -- DAY 39

A restaurant/bar near Foley Square. TIM'S was a sweet-looking, pubbish tavern that's gone out of business. Several vans double-parked outside as we hear --

AUCTIONEER (V.O.)
...lot 37, two Fryolater six gallon units. They're new, they're clean, let's start five hundred the pair...

40 INT. "TIM'S" KITCHEN -- DAY 40

FIFTEEN BUYERS bunched like starlings around the AUCTIONEER. Men with clipboards. Equipment all tagged and stacked and ready to roll.

AUCTIONEER
...five hundred, I've got five -- five-fifty. Six. This is two units, folks. Six, I see six-fifty. Seven...

41 INT. "TIM'S" BAR/DINING ROOM -- DAY 41

Dark. Stripped down. Stools, blenders, cash registers -- everything stacked and tagged. MICHAEL alone at the bar. Sounds of the carcass being picked over in the BG. GABE ZABEL, loanshark, enters from the kitchen.

ZABEL
He says you're still gonna be short.

MICHAEL
How short?

ZABEL
Sixty. Plus the points. Seventy-five thousand.

A body blow. MICHAEL trying to hide the impact.

MICHAEL
That's liquor and everything?

ZABEL
What'd you think it was gonna be?

MICHAEL
I don't know. Less. Thirty. Twenty.
(the Auctioneer bleating away in the BG--)
He's taking fifteen hundred on a refrigerator I paid four grand for.

ZABEL
Make a bid.

MICHAEL nods. Suck it up. Be a man.

ZABEL
You don't have this seventy-five?

MICHAEL
Just laying around? No.

ZABEL
Where's your cousin?

MICHAEL
Forget that.

ZABEL
Michael, look, you want to front this, that's up to you, but Timmy's name stays in the book until we're clear.
(MORE)

ZABEL (cont'd)
(gentle but firm)
If I know where he is, I don't have to keep asking.

MICHAEL
He's upstate. His wife took him back. He's living in his in-laws basement.

ZABEL
He's gotta have something.

MICHAEL
Sure. He's got the two kids with her. He's got Jennifer, the coke-dealing waitress he knocked up. Four Michelin snow tires he boosted from my sister's garage...
(a fuck-it smile)
Make him an offer.

ZABEL nods. His version of sympathy.

ZABEL
I had a wife was a drunk. Beautiful girl. Young girl. But live like that? Even they do a program. I think she did once two years. It's like you're strapped to a bomb.

MICHAEL
Timmy was sober six years.

ZABEL
That's what I'm saying. Then they slip? Forget it. They don't give a shit, they're stoned. It's everybody else who's got a problem.

Enough with this. They both have places to be.

MICHAEL
What's my time frame here?

ZABEL
For you?
(beat)
I don't know. I didn't think it was gonna be a problem.
(Michael's silence says it is)
I'll ask.

MICHAEL nods. THE AUCTIONEER still at it, as --

42 INT. LAW FIRM BUILDING LOBBY -- DAY 42

MICHAEL'S ID CARD swiping the scanner. SECURITY GUARDS all smiles for MICHAEL as he passes. KENNER, BACH & LEDEEN LOGO by the elevator bank and --

43 INT. ELEVATOR BANK/ELEVATOR -- DAY 43

MICHAEL making it as the doors close. Three lawyers in here. Dominant power is JEFF GAFFNEY. Big blowhard partner.

GAFFNEY
Hey, Miguel, how's it going?

MICHAEL
Great, Jeff, how's it with you?

Both men instantly into a superficial, glad-hand familiarity.

GAFFNEY
You know Brini...

MICHAEL
Sure.

BRINI GLASS nods hello. She's a young polished, go-getter. The guy standing beside her a chilly, forty year-old Brit --

GAFFNEY
This is Paul Julian. Paul's visiting us from the UK...

MICHAEL
How you doing? Michael Clayton.

PAUL JULIAN with a quick hello. Handshake. The usual crap.

GAFFNEY
Michael's the guy who actually knows everything that's really going on here.
(with a smile)
He won't tell you, but he knows.

MICHAEL
Which is what the guys who <u>really</u> know what's going on always say to cover their tracks.
(THE DOORS OPEN, stepping off as--)
Take it easy, Jeff. Brini.

ELEVATOR DOORS CLOSE. MICHAEL, alone, drops the punchline smile. Heading toward his office as we begin to hear --

MICHAEL (V.O.)
...look, Del, I don't know how hard to press here. You're gonna have to let me know how brave he wants to be.

DEL (SPEAKERPHONE)
Well, I'm not sure how brave he can be right now. We just got a confirmation hearing scheduled for the end of the month.
(continuing, as--)

44 INT. MICHAEL'S OFFICE/TIME CUTS -- DAY 44

A large corner twenty stories high. Midtown looming through windows. Probably the best office on this floor. But it's not a partner's floor. More comfortable than flashy. More clubhouse than a place to bring clients. WALLS COVERED WITH PHOTOGRAPHS AND MEMORABILIA. A cluttered mix of banquet handshake pics and framed family snapshots. Two decades of testimonial horseshit and tribal gatherings. MICHAEL pacing and THE CAMERA WANDERING as --

MICHAEL/PHONE
Any chance she knows that?

DEL/PHONE
It was in the paper. Who knows? Maybe she got someone to read it to her.
(incredulous, angry)
She called his wife yesterday. She's calling his house. It's a nightmare.

MICHAEL/PHONE
My guess is that she's gonna want to hang onto this condo.

DEL/PHONE
That's insane.

MICHAEL/PHONE
What can I tell you? Don't piss off a motivated stripper.

DEL/PHONE
Unbelievable.

MICHAEL/PHONE
Look, find out his pain threshold and get back to me. I'll take it from there. Or have him call me...

DEL/PHONE
I hear you. Lemme get into it.
(click, and--)

MICHAEL
(hanging up, calling back out the door--)
Where are we with Marty?

ADRISE
(calling back)
We left word.

TIME CUT

Later. New call. MICHAEL pacing and talking.

MICHAEL/PHONE
How old's the kid?

WENDY/PHONE
He's not a kid. He's twenty-two.

MICHAEL/PHONE
This is Miami?

WENDY/PHONE
Key Biscayne.

MICHAEL/PHONE
They charged him?

WENDY/PHONE
Reckless Endangerment. My client, I think really what they want, they want a reality check on the attorney down there. Wayne said you had some connections in the area...

MICHAEL/PHONE
Yup. Lemme just grab a pen here...

TIME CUT

Later. New call. Michael pacing and talking.

RANDALL/PHONE
What're you trying to do, Michael? Get me to kill the story?

MICHAEL/PHONE
Randy, please...
(playful but..)
I'm saying let somebody else write it.

RANDALL/PHONE
Why would I do that?

MICHAEL/PHONE
Love? Decency? Fear? Want me to keep going?

RANDALL/PHONE
C'mon, man...

MICHAEL/PHONE
You know what story I keep waiting to read? The one about the business reporter who's sick of watching everyone else get rich.

Silence. Tone shift. MICHAEL waiting.

RANDALL/PHONE
This is breaking news, or something you're just spitballing?

MICHAEL
The Beverly Fund's looking for a new Director Of Communications. I gave them your name, I hope you don't mind.

TIME CUT

Later. New call. MICHAEL by the window --

MICHAEL/PHONE
-- if she calls INS directly she's gonna get nowhere --

EVAN/PHONE
-- even with the appointment? --

MICHAEL/PHONE
-- it's retail, Evan, it's like DMV over there, unless they get a call from a District Supervisor nobody moves --

EVAN/PHONE
-- but your guy can do that? --

MICHAEL/PHONE
-- he's a former Commissioner --

EVAN/PHONE
-- and none of this comes back to me, right? Cause that doesn't do anybody any good.

MICHAEL/PHONE
No, I'd be the one doing the asking.

EVAN/PHONE
Can you hang on a minute?

MICHAEL
Sure.
(on hold now, glancing back because--)

ADRISE, his assistant, is in the doorway. 35. Bay Ridge.

ADRISE
Are we merging?

MICHAEL
What?

ADRISE
Marty Bach's in London. First they said he was in Atlanta, then Lara said he was in the building, so I called back up -- I know you want this meeting -- now she tells me the truth, he's really in London.
(quiet, nervous)
Are we merging? Because that's what everyone's saying. All these Brits. That this time it's for real.

MICHAEL
Like I would know.
(she's staring like, "yes, you would."--)
I don't know.

A PHONE starts ringing now from behind her --

ADRISE
Even if we are, even if they merged, it wouldn't effect you, right?

MICHAEL
Adrise, your phone is ringing.

She steps out to answer. MICHAEL alone again. Still standing there. Still absorbing this morning's shrapnel, as --

45 EXT. OMAHA NEBRASKA -- DAY 45

Cold morning. Stark windblown flatness. A highway on-ramp in the foreground tells us where we are. As we hear:

KAREN HAUER (V.O.)
At the moment, U/North currently has seventy thousand employees working in sixty-two countries around the world...
(continuing, as we--)

46 INT. KAREN'S OMAHA HOME/BATHROOM -- DAY 46

KAREN BAUER alone at the mirror. Fresh from the shower --

KAREN
...around the planet...sixty-two countries around the planet.
(trying it again)
At work in more than sixty countries around the globe.

47 INT. U/NORTH OMAHA CONFERENCE ROOM -- DAY 47

Later that morning. KAREN and her boss, DON JEFFRIES, a 60-year-old Corporate titan, on one side of the table. Facing them, A SMALL VIDEO CREW: CAMERAMAN, SOUND, and INTERVIEWER. The filming part of some in-house promotional puffery --

KAREN
...right now we've got seventy-five thousand employees in over sixty countries around the planet.

48 INT. KAREN'S OMAHA HOME/BATHROOM -- DAY 48

As before, at the mirror --

KAREN
...so the volume...the quantity of legal issues is just overwhelming...
(reset)
...just enormous.
(trying it folksy)
You can imagine, the volume of legal issues...it's just enormous...it's...

49 INT. U/NORTH OMAHA CONFERENCE ROOM -- DAY 49

Video camera rolling and --

KAREN
...it's quite substantial. As general counsel, what I do -- our in-house department -- we analyze the dimensions of the problem or the opportunity, we determine the jurisdiction, and we farm our business to the firms and talent we think can help us the most.

50 INT. KAREN'S OMAHA HOME/KITCHEN -- DAY 50

Sadly pleasant and anonymous. KAREN buttering toast and --

KAREN
Balance?
(smiling for the imaginary camera--)
I think everyone has to find their own mix. I like work. I enjoy my job.
(try again)
I find I feel most alive when I'm...
(fuck)
I realized a long time ago, that...
(hating this, and--)

51 INT. U/NORTH OMAHA CONFERENCE ROOM -- DAY 51

INTERVIEWER
So how do you keep a balance between work and life?

52 INT. KAREN'S OMAHA HOME/BEDROOM 52

As lonely and ordinary as the rest. KAREN pulling on her stockings and --

KAREN
Balance?
(trying to pretend the question surprises her--)
Honestly? I think all this concern about "balance" actually creates more stress than...

53 INT. U/NORTH OMAHA CONFERENCE ROOM -- DAY 53

KAREN
...your priorities change, you make a new plans. But my goal -- right now, today -- is to be the second best General Counsel this company has ever seen.

DON JEFFRIES, THE INTERVIEWER, everyone smiling at this --

KAREN
Don brought me in here twelve years ago.
(big smile for Don)
Trusted me. Mentored me.

54 INT. KAREN'S OMAHA HOME/BATHROOM -- DAY 54

KAREN
(make-up at the mirror)
...and when Don moved up to the boardroom, I never really thought that I'd have the opportunity to move into his place...
(reset)
...his position...his office...his...

55 INT. U/NORTH OMAHA CONFERENCE ROOM -- DAY 55

KAREN
...because if you're ultimately not comfortable with the responsibility, you're in the wrong place. It's your department. It's your ability to make tough decisions in real time and--
(stopping because--)

A SECRETARY has nervously poked her head in the door --

SECRETARY
Ms. Bauer?

DON JEFFRIES
We're in the middle of an interview...

SECRETARY
They said it was urgent.

56 INT. BARRY GRISSOM'S OFFICE -- DAY 56

New York power office. BARRY GRISSOM -- the senior partner we met in the opening scene -- he's pacing, on the phone, listening to some very shitty news. THREE OTHER ATTORNEYS working phones around the room. Some major crisis --

BARRY
...Jesus...Jesus...Jesus...
(listening)
...this was...oh, Jesus...Jesus...
(each pause more painful)
...this is in the?...omigod...Jesus...
(MORE)

BARRY (cont'd)
you're gonna have...oh, Jesus...
(looking up and--)
...hang on --
(a savior)
-- there you are!

MICHAEL in the doorway. All eyes rushing to him --

MICHAEL
What's up?

BARRY
Arthur Edens just stripped down naked in a deposition room in Milwaukee.

57 EXT. TETERBORO AIRPORT -- DAY 57

Fifty one minutes later. MICHAEL crossing the tarmac toward a private jet, as we begin to hear the familiar express train chatter of --

ARTHUR EDENS (V.O.)
...even this, Michael -- even now -- that you're here -- there's a reason, a reason it's you -- every reason -- surely you can sense that -- how it pulls together -- how it gathers -- Nurse Michael -- Secret Hero -- Keeper of the Hidden Sins -- tell me you can see that, Michael, for God's sake...
(continuing, as--)

58 EXT. MILWAUKEE ATRIUM HOTEL -- DAY 58

The big one out near the airport. And it's SNOWING. Hard. Starting to really come down --

ARTHUR EDENS (V.O.)
...and yes -- I mean, okay, the nudity -- the parking lot -- I admit it -- mistake! It was wrong. It was lame. It was obvious. And frankly, for me, therapeutically, it was useless, because Michael, I swear, if I stood there and peeled off my fucking skin I couldn't get down to where this thing is living...

A LUXURY VAN whipping up to the entrance. KAREN and her two assistants, MAUDE and TODD, exiting the vehicle. This a well-practiced, military drill: MAUDE rushing for an assault on the front desk. TODD flanking with the luggage and gear.

ARTHUR EDENS (V.O.)
...Six years, Michael! Six years I've absorbed this poison! Six years -- four hundred depositions -- a hundred motions -- five changes of venue -- eighty-four thousand documents in discovery!

KAREN wasting not a moment, working a cell phone and a call sheet -- a tightened jaw her only surrender to the urgency and crisis of the moment --

ARTHUR EDENS (V.O.)
...Six years I've steered this beast, Michael -- six years of stalling and screaming and scheming and...

59 INT. MILWAUKEE JAIL HOLDING CELL -- NIGHT 59

A shabby, ugly pisshole. Two chairs. No air. ARTHUR EDENS in the flesh. Late fifties. Brilliance and grace amidst the manic shambles.

ARTHUR
Look at me, Michael. Twelve percent of my life has been spent protecting the reputation of a deadly weedkiller!

MICHAEL
(sitting there)
We had an agreement, Arthur.

ARTHUR
(oblivious)
-- one night, right? -- I look up and Marty's standing in my office with a bottle of champagne --

MICHAEL
Do you remember our agreement?

ARTHUR
-- I know, just let me -- just --
(he simply can't stop)
-- he tells me we've just hit thirty-thousand billable hours on U/North and he wants to celebrate. An hour later, I'm in a whorehouse in Chelsea and two Lithuanian redheads are taking turns sucking my dick. I'm laying there, I'm trying not to come, I'm trying to make it last, right? So I start doing the math -- thirty thousand hours --
(MORE)

ARTHUR (cont'd)
what is that? -- twenty-four times thirty -- seven-hundred twenty hours in a month -- eight-thousand-seven-hundred and sixty hours per year...

MICHAEL
Arthur.

ARTHUR
Wait!
(on his feet now, pacing, faster and faster--)
Because it's years -- it's lives -- and the numbers are making me dizzy, and now, now I'm not just trying not to come, I'm trying not to think! But I can't stop! Is that me? Am I just some freak organism that's been put here to eat and sleep and spend my days defending this one horrific chain of carcinogenic molecules? Is that my destiny? Is this is my place?

MICHAEL
You promised me, Arthur.

ARTHUR
Is that it, Michael?
(edgy suddenly)
Is that my grail? Two Lithuanian mouths on my cock? Is that the correct answer to the multiple choice of me?

MICHAEL grabs him -- hard -- pulling him close --

MICHAEL
You want to go off your medication? Fine. But you call me first.
(face-to-face)
That was our agreement.

ARTHUR staring back. Eyes wild. Euphoric.

ARTHUR
Sue me.

CRACK! -- MICHAEL startled -- behind him -- A MILWAUKEE JAIL GUARD rapping on the bars --

JAIL GUARD
We okay in there?

MICHAEL
(letting Arthur go)
We're fine.

THE JAIL GUARD hesitates. Moves on.

ARTHUR
(whispering now)
They killed these people, Michael. Little farms. Family farms. This girl, Anna, did you see her?

MICHAEL
No.

ARTHUR
You need to see her. Talk to her. She's a miracle. She's is God's perfect creature. And for fifty million dollars in fees I have spent twelve percent of my life destroying perfect Anna and her dead parents and her dying brother.

MICHAEL pulls a pillbox from his pocket --

MICHAEL
When's the last time you took one of these?

ARTHUR
No. I'm not losing this.
(backing away)
Everything is finally significant. The world is radiant and beautiful and you want me to trade that for this?

MICHAEL
If it's real, the pill won't kill it.

ARTHUR
I have blood on my hands.

MICHAEL
You are a Senior Litigating Partner at one of the largest, most respected law firms in the world. You're a legend.

ARTHUR
I'm an accomplice.

MICHAEL
You're a manic depressive.

ARTHUR
I'm Shiva the God of death.

MICHAEL
Let's get out of Milwaukee and we'll talk about it.

60 INT. MILWAUKEE HOTEL CONFERENCE ROOM -- DAY 60

VIDEO FOOTAGE. A deposition in progress. Drab room. Drab vibe. HALF-A-DOZEN ATTORNEYS on either side of a table. Perhaps we glimpse a face or two, but the camera's angle is set to feature the witness -- ANNA KYSURSEN is twenty-three years old. Big. And blonde. Cream skinned. Ripe. Open. Plain. Arthur's dairy madonna.

ANNA
...we came back from the hospital and everybody was crying and we were in shock, but we still, we had to milk.

LAWYER'S VOICE
The cows won't wait will they?

ANNA
No.

LAWYER'S VOICE
And when you went to the barn...

ANNA
We found the note. My sister found it.

LAWYER'S VOICE
From your mother.

ANNA
Yes.

LAWYER'S VOICE
Could you read it for us?

ANNA fighting back an onslaught of emotion, finds a piece of paper there in front of her.

LAWYER'S VOICE
Anna?
(Anna looks up, hands shaking--)
Why don't you just read us the third paragraph -- just the highlighted section there.

ANNA nods. Bearing down. But it's tough...

ANNA
"I don't want you blaming Ned Hardy, or any of the people down at the feedlot. They're just farmers themselves. U/North fooled them just as bad as us and Joe has had enough pain already..."
(but now she's crying--)

LAWYER'S VOICE
Anna?

Suddenly, another voice explodes through the room --

ARTHUR
ANNA, I'M SORRY! I LOVE YOU! I'M SORRY! I'M SO VERY VERY SORRY!

For a moment there's this weird paralyzed silence -- everyone too stunned to react -- everyone except for ARTHUR -- he's standing and we're sort of seeing him from the back -- seeing him rip his shirt away from his body and --

ANOTHER LAWYER'S VOICE
-- what the hell is he? -- what're you doing? --

AND ANOTHER
-- omigod, he's --

AND ANOTHER
-- Arthur? -- ARTHUR! --

ARTHUR
I LOVE YOU, ANNA! AND I'M SORRY! I'M SO VERY VERY SORRY! I LOVE YOU!

Instant chaos -- motion -- VOICES YELLING -- THE CAMERA JOSTLED -- someone's throwing a punch -- ARTHUR still stripping and struggling and begging for forgiveness, and then, suddenly, it all goes black as we REVERSE TO --

61 INT. KAREN'S MILWAUKEE HOTEL SUITE -- NIGHT 61

KAREN staring at a blank VIDEO MONITOR.

TODD
(with the remote)
I guess that's it.

KAREN stands. Ashen. Silent. Outside, through the window we can see the snow pouring down --

KAREN
They close O'Hare?

MAUDE across the room. Sitting at a quickly assembled communications desk. Laptops, printers, wireless antennae --

MAUDE
Four minutes ago. There's a foot of snow in Detroit already...

KAREN
You have Don?

MAUDE
Still with the board.

KAREN
Who's the guy they sent from New York? Clayton. I never heard of him.

62/63 INT. MILWAUKEE POLICE PRECINCT HOLDING DESK -- NIGHT 62/63

Active. MILWAUKEE COPS coming and going. Snow on boots. Wet gloves. MICHAEL in his wheelhouse, chatting up a DESK SERGEANT AND LIEUTENANT as --

MAUDE (V.O.)
Michael Raymond Clayton. Born September nine, 1959, St. Joseph's Hospital, Bronx, New York. Father is Patrolman, Raymond Xavier Clayton, twenty-six. Mother, Alice Mary Clayton, twenty-three...

A YOUNG PROSECUTOR arrives. She's got Arthur's paperwork, MICHAEL turning on the charm, getting her to smile --

MAUDE (V.O.)
...Graduates Washingtonville Central High School, Orange County New York in 1977. Graduates St. John's University, 1980. Fordham Law, '82. '82 through '86 he's an ADA with the Queens District Attorney's Office...

MICHAEL signing a desk ticket for Arthur. Handed his personal effects.

MAUDE (V.O.)
...1986 he's with a Joint Manhattan-Queens Organized Crime Task Force. And then, 1990 he starts at Kenner, Bach & Ledeen.

64 INT. KAREN'S MILWAUKEE HOTEL SUITE -- NIGHT 64

MAUDE at her screens. KAREN over her shoulder --

KAREN
So he's a partner.

MAUDE
Nope. He's listed as "Special Counsel." Says he specializes in Wills and Trusts.

KAREN
He goes from criminal prosecution to Wills and Trusts? He's there thirteen years he's not a partner? And he's the guy they sent?
(reading it again)
Who is this guy?

65 EXT. MILWAUKEE STREET -- NIGHT 65

A MILWAUKEE POLICE CRUISER crawling through the snow.

66 INT. MILWAUKEE POLICE CRUISER -- NIGHT (CONT) 66

TWO PATROLMEN up front. MICHAEL and a beatific, sedated, ARTHUR EDENS in back. MICHAEL's eyes out the window. The look of an actor who's played this part too often.

67 INT. ASSOCIATES MILWAUKEE HOTEL SUITE -- NIGHT 67

Temporary Milwaukee home of Kenner Bach & Ledeen. More dorm room than office. Pizza boxes. Masses of paper. Boomboxes and laptops. Gym clothes and garment bags and --

MICHAEL
So none of you, nobody had any idea he was coming.
(he's talking to--)

FOUR YOUNG LAWYERS. Two first year associates. One third year. One fifth. Familiar faces from the deposition video.

THIRD YEAR
(are you kidding?)
To Milwaukee? For a deposition?

FIFTH YEAR
We thought maybe there was some kind of settlement in the works. There's been some rumors, so we thought maybe he was here for that, but...

MICHAEL
Who talked to him?

FIRST YEAR
I did.
(nervous)
He just said he wanted to depose this girl Anna. And could he borrow some headphones.

MICHAEL
All right, look...
(he's heard enough)
This is very simple. Arthur's got a chemical imbalance. He's supposed to be on medication. He fell behind with that. He's back on the mend. He'll be fine in three, four days.

MICHAEL letting that sink in a moment. Now the hammer.

MICHAEL
What happened here stays here. I want that crystal clear. This is not a piece of information you want to be out in front of. Anybody has a problem with that let me know right now.
(dead silence)
We're stuck here overnight. I'm gonna get him home tomorrow if I can. Who's in charge of the deposition schedule?

THIRD YEAR
I am.

MICHAEL
Where does it stand?

THIRD YEAR
I guess it's on hold. We didn't know exactly what to--

MICHAEL
Nothing's on hold. You just do what you were planning on doing. The other side wants to talk about it, let them call New York, okay?
(four heads bobbing--)
And I need his briefcase.

FIFTH YEAR
Arthur's? I don't...

MICHAEL
He says he left it in the room.

FIRST YEAR
It might be with the stuff Jody grabbed...

The search through the clutter has begun and --

MICHAEL
Find it.

68 INT. HENRY CLAYTON'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT 68

THE CAMERA moving over a collage of fantasy images: Posters, postcards; magazine pages and book covers; fantasy landscapes and fantasy castles, fantasy characters, journeys and battles, as we hear...

HENRY (OS)
...so all these people, they all start having these dreams, okay? You know what a vision quest is? Like for Navahos and stuff?

ARTHUR (PHONE/OVER)
(thick with thorazine)
I think so. Like a special dream.

HENRY (OS)
Except this is like a whole bunch of people having the same dream. They're all having this dream that they should go to this one place. They don't know why or anything, they just have this feeling that they have to go there.

ARTHUR (PHONE/OVER)
That they've been summoned.

HENRY IN HIS LOFT BED. On the phone. Past his bedtime.

HENRY
That's the chapter!
(excited)
That's what it's called. "Summons to Conquest." Seriously, that's the title.

69 INT. MICHAEL'S MILWAUKEE HOTEL BEDROOM -- NIGHT (CONT) 69

ARTHUR EDENS alone in a dark hotel room bed. Doped up.

ARTHUR
Do they know? Do they know they're all having the same dream?

HENRY (PHONE/OVER)
No, that's what's so cool, they all think it's just them, that maybe they're like going crazy or something so they don't want to admit it.

ARTHUR
But they're not crazy, are they?

70 INT. HENRY CLAYTON'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT 70

HENRY
No, it's real. It's really happening.

ARTHUR (PHONE/OVER)
It is happening, isn't it? Something larger than themselves, they're just not ready, are they, to hear it --"

HENRY
-- yeah, but then later they do, so if you're gonna read it, I don't want to spoil it --
(stopping because--)

GERALD (stepfather) standing at the bedroom doorway.

GERALD
-- what are you doing? -- who're you talking to?

HENRY
-- I called my dad -- some friend of dad's --

GERALD
-- it's like ten-thirty, Henry --

71 INT. MICHAEL'S MILWAUKEE HOTEL BEDROOM -- NIGHT 71

ARTHUR
(frantic suddenly)
-- Hello... Hello? --
(he can hear them arguing in the BG--)

HENRY (PHONE/OVER)
I gotta get off now.

ARTHUR
-- wait! -- the book -- I need the book -- the title -- and you, I don't know your name...

HENRY (PHONE/OVER)
I'm Henry. The book is called Realm and Conquest.

ARTHUR
(fumbling for a pen)
Realm and Conquest.

HENRY (PHONE/OVER)
It's Book One with a red cover.
(Gerald pressing in the background--)
I gotta go -- tell my dad I called, okay?

ARTHUR
Thank you, Henry. Thank you.
(dial tone)
Thank you.
(silence)
Thank you.

72 INT. MILWAUKEE HOTEL BAR -- NIGHT 72

MICHAEL enters. It's late. He's late. BARTENDER and WAITRESS ready to start cashing out. He sees KAREN across the room. She's been waiting. He summons one last smile and starts for the table.

MICHAEL
There you are. Sorry I'm late.

KAREN
Where is he?

MICHAEL
He's asleep. He's out cold.
(her empty glass)
Do you want anything? I think they're about to close the register.

KAREN
(not having it)
Tell me this was some kind of strategy.

MICHAEL
Wouldn't that be nice.

KAREN
You saw this tape? The video?

MICHAEL
I heard about it.

KAREN
What happened after was worse.

MICHAEL
He'll be fine once he's back on the medication.

But she's not listening. She's flipping through a notepad --

KAREN
This was in the parking lot, okay? These people are running for their cars, he's got nothing on but his socks, and whatever the hell your team was doing to stop this was clearly not working, because --
(reading her notes)
"I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. I will not sit with this sickness any longer. I cannot aid this sickness any longer."
(incredulous)
What does that mean?

MICHAEL
I'm not really sure.

KAREN
You've been with him all afternoon. What's he been saying?

MICHAEL
Not much.
(flat out lying)
We got him sedated pretty quickly.

KAREN
This is totally unacceptable....

MICHAEL
Once he's back on the medication, it's really just a matter of--

KAREN
This is a three-billion dollar class-action lawsuit! Tomorrow morning I have to call my board and tell them the architect of our entire defense was
(MORE)

KAREN (cont'd)
arrested running naked in a snowstorm chasing the plaintiffs through a parking lot!

MICHAEL
I understand.

KAREN
What "sickness" is he talking about?

MICHAEL
Could be a lot of things.

KAREN
Name one.

MICHAEL
Frostbite?

KAREN
You think this is funny?

MICHAEL
Look, his wife was sick, she died last year. His daughter doesn't talk to him. He's all alone. All he does is your case. He skipped his pills. He had a bad day. It's that simple.

KAREN
And you're an authority on this?

MICHAEL
His last episode was eight years ago. I was there. I helped bring him home. I watched him get better.
(intimate here)
I mean, c'mon...you didn't hire Arthur for his low-key regularity. You took him because he's a killer and he's brilliant and he's just crazy enough to grind away on a case like this for six years without a break.

KAREN
Excuse me, but we pay for his time.

MICHAEL
I thought you wanted an explanation.

KAREN folds the notebook. Steely silence.

KAREN
I'm calling Marty Bach in the morning. But then you know that...

MICHAEL nods. Understood.

73 INT. MICHAEL'S MILWAUKEE HOTEL SITTING ROOM -- NIGHT 73

THE POLICE LT. -- the guy Michael was glad-handing in the precinct -- but out of uniform now. Pulling on his parka getting ready to go home.

POLICE LT.
He was mostly just quiet. I heard him moving around, I gave him the other pill about fifteen minutes ago.

MICHAEL taking off his jacket. Pulling a nice, thick envelope from the pocket. Time to pay the babysitter --

MICHAEL
I really appreciate it, Elston.
(handing it over--)
You get to New York, you know you're coming, give me a heads up.

POLICE LT.
I'll do that for sure.

74 INT. MICHAEL'S MILWAUKEE HOTEL BEDROOM -- NIGHT 74

A minute later. MICHAEL enters. It's quiet. Dark. Dim light from the bathroom. MICHAEL pulls off his tie. What a fucking day. Taking off his watch, when --

ARTHUR
(voice from the bed)
Did you see her?

MICHAEL
Who?

ARTHUR
Anna.

ARTHUR bleary and soporific. Beached there.

MICHAEL
Anna? No. No, I didn't see her.
(like you'd talk to a child)
She probably went back to the farm.

ARTHUR
We need her.

MICHAEL nods. Barely listening. Kicking off his shoes.

ARTHUR
Marty. Even then. The rest of them. They won't understand.

MICHAEL
(just humoring him)
Don't worry, Arthur, if anybody can explain it to them, it's you.

ARTHUR
No. They're lost. They have what they want.

MICHAEL
Let it go, man. Get some sleep.

Silence now. MICHAEL moves to the window. Standing there. Pulling the curtain. Loosening his collar. Watching snow fall across the parking lot. When, suddenly --

ARTHUR
(loud and clear)
Is this what you wanted?

ARTHUR there in the half-light. Sitting up. Defying the medication. Sheer will.

ARTHUR
Be a janitor? Live like this? Do this? What you do...

MICHAEL caught off-guard. Not prepared for clarity.

ARTHUR
It <u>can't</u> be. That I <u>know</u> this. The burden. That's what I'm telling you.
(weakening)
How it feels. That I know...
(going fast)
That we've been summoned...

MICHAEL not sure what to say, or if there's even anybody listening, because ARTHUR is already sloping back into the pillows; already drifting back under the medication's gravitational pull and...

MICHAEL alone now. Standing there at the window. Shaken.

75 **INT. KAREN'S MILWAUKEE HOTEL SUITE -- NIGHT** 75

ARTHUR EDEN'S BRIEFCASE. Bathed in the light of a hotel desk lamp. The initials A.D.E. embossed in the worn, old leather. THE CAMERA MOVING across the desk, as we hear the sound of a PHONE RINGING THROUGH THE LINE and --

VERNE (PHONE/OVER)
Hello?

KAREN (OS)
(tense, tentative)
Yes. Hi. I'm looking for Vern?

THE CONTENTS OF THE BRIEFCASE arranged in piles around the desk. A chaotic mix of legal documents, bizarre books, and a few odd, found objects --

VERNE (PHONE/OVER)
You have a number?

KAREN (OS)
Don Jeffries gave it to me, he said I could call anytime...

VERNE (PHONE/OVER)
The account number.

KAREN (OS)
The code. Yes. Sorry. I have it...
(papers rustling in the background, as--)

THE CAMERA FEATURES -- ONE DOCUMENT -- at the center of everything. Space on the desk cleared around it. It's a photocopy of a letter dated, June, 19, 1991:

UNITED-NORTHFIELD
CALCITRATE -- INTERNAL RESEARCH MEMORANDUM #229

And there's no need to get into the text of this memo right now. It is, however, important that we feel the *extreme* danger and power this document has for KAREN.

KAREN (OS)
...okay, it's twelve-B-K-R-6.

KAREN holding the phone with one hand, the other covered with an improvised glove made from a plastic hotel laundry bag --

KAREN
Am I speaking with Vern?

VERNE (PHONE/OVER)
Mister Verne.

KAREN
I'm sorry it's so late. Don said just...I'm not really...I don't know how this works so...

VERNE (PHONE/OVER)
You have e-mail at your current location?

KAREN
Yes.

VERNE (PHONE/OVER)
I'm gonna upload you a little encryption package we like. It's pretty self-explanatory.

KAREN
Okay.

VERNE (PHONE/OVER)
Let me get to my desk.

She's on hold. The "gloved" hand reaches down for the memo there at the center of it all. Her eyes scan the words, as if maybe his time they'll be different. They're not. She catches her reflection now in the mirror over the desk. Frozen like that. Waiting, as --

76 INT. MICHAEL'S MILWAUKEE HOTEL SITTING ROOM -- DAY 76

Morning. The storm is over. MICHAEL has showered. He's drinking room service coffee, pacing around on a cell phone --

MICHAEL
...no, I know. We were on the bubble till then. We just couldn't stay open.
(impatient pause)
Yeah, what I'm wondering, I've got an option on the lease for six more years. You know the space, I'm wondering if you think there's any chance I could lay that off? Is the lease worth anything?
(pause)
Eighty-five hundred a month. I mean, the fixtures are gone, but the bar, the kitchen, the space is...

MICHAEL listening and it's not the answer he was hoping for. And he's pacing around, taking us INTO --

77 INT. MICHAEL'S MILWAUKEE HOTEL BEDROOM 77

The two beds unmade. SHOWER going in the bathroom and --

MICHAEL
(finally)
No...no, I hear you. I just...
(pause)
Yup. You got it. Thanks anyway.
(beat)
I will.

MICHAEL hangs up. Numb. Trying to shake it off.

MICHAEL
(checking his watch)
Let's go, Arthur!

No answer. MICHAEL starts to turn away. Then he stops.

MICHAEL
Arthur!
(he tries the door, it's locked--)
Arthur! You hear me? Open the door.
(banging on it now--)
Open the goddam door, Arthur!
(harder)
ARTHUR! OPEN THE DOOR!

Because suddenly, the anger has transformed into fear -- he's trying the door again -- really trying it --

MICHAEL
ARTHUR, CAN YOU HEAR ME?

MICHAEL rearing back -- coming in hard now and --

MICHAEL
-- shit! --
(he just banged the hell out of his shoulder--)
GODDAMIT, ARTHUR!

The body slam was useless, but it's not an impossible door -- he's standing back -- clutching his shoulder -- kicking as hard as he can near the knob and --

THE DOOR groans -- gives a little -- MICHAEL kicking again -- now it SPLINTERS -- MICHAEL giving it everything this time

and this time THE DOOR shatters off its hinges, still sort of hanging there as MICHAEL pushes and claws it away, rushing now into --

78 INT. MICHAEL'S MILWAUKEE HOTEL SUITE/BATHROOM -- DAY 78

MICHAEL stopping cold. The shower is running and nobody's in there. The window is open. Arthur is gone. Written on the mirror in shaving cream:

MAKE BELIEVE IT'S NOT JUST MADNESS!

79 EXT. MIAMI GOLF CLUB -- DAY 79

A CORPORATE LOGO -- embossed on a high-quality, leather golf bag:

u/north

"we grow your world together"

WIDER TO REVEAL

THE PRO-SHOP/BAG DROP of a first-class golf club. It's a gorgeous, sunny morning. A CADDY reaching in -- shouldering the bag --

CADDY
Not playing today, Mr. Verne?

MR. VERNE turns. He's one of those guys who looks like he's been in his late forties forever. Trim but solid. Tan and clean. Pressed and fresh. Every piece of gear in place.

VERNE
Yeah, we had a change in plan...
(pointing out to the parking lot--)
That's gonna go in the Navigator.
The black one. It's open.

THE CADDY starts for the car, as MR. IKER comes out of the locker room. IKER is a slightly younger version of Mr. Verne. Country club slacks. Good loafers. Hands and forearms that speak of deeper experience than the back nine.

IKER
You want anything for the road?
They've got that great fruit salad...

VERNE
(checking his watch)
Naw, we better hit it.

80 INT. LAW FIRM/MARTY BACH'S OFFICE -- DAY 80

MARTY BACH at his desk. In his hands, a copy of U/NORTH RESEARCH MEMO #229. ARTHUR'S BRIEFCASE open beside him.

KAREN watching him read. Just the two of them. And the silence is deafening. Finally, he finishes. Like a doctor holding a malignant X-ray...

MARTY
That's really Don's signature?
(she nods)
Where's the original?

KAREN
We had an unfortunate warehouse fire five years ago. We lost a number of documents.

MARTY hesitates. *Okay...*

MARTY
How does this end up in Arthur's bag?

KAREN
There's a three billion dollar question for you.

81 EXT. SIXTH AVENUE -- NIGHT 81

City in motion.

82 INT. LAW FIRM/ARTHUR EDEN'S OFFICE -- NIGHT 82

A SILVER FRAMED PHOTOGRAPH. Young Arthur Edens with his wife and baby daughter. Some faded happy moment. This one of several very traditional items, on a very traditional desk. In fact the whole place is almost disturbingly repressed. The only thing out of place are the dozens of document boxes piled at the center of the room.

MARTY and BARRY GRISSOM digging through all of it. Like they've been at it a while.

MARTY
I want all this -- everything here -- I want it all boxed up and sent to my apartment.

MICHAEL in the doorway. Watching them plunder. Until --

MARTY
(without looking back)
Any luck, Michael?

BARRY turns, surprised. MICHAEL steps into the office.

MICHAEL
He booked a limo from Newark airport at three. He got out at West Fourth Street, tipped the driver fifty bucks, and walked away.

MARTY
You try his place?

MICHAEL
It's a loft. There's no doorman. I rang, nobody answered. I call, I get the machine.

BARRY
(thanks for nothing)
So basically, he could be anywhere...

MICHAEL bites his tongue. No love lost with Barry.

MARTY
Arthur downtown was not a good idea.
(holding a family photo)
You ever go to their apartment when Eileen was alive?
(Michael nods)
She wasn't dead a week he had it on the market.

MICHAEL
She was sick for a long time.

MARTY
But downtown? Some goddam loft?

BARRY
Where's his daughter?

MICHAEL
He's not sure. Spain? India?

MARTY
Mars.
(putting down the photograph--)
She's crazier than he'll ever be.
(to Michael)
(MORE)

MARTY (cont'd)
Barry's going to take over on U/North. We've all got a lot of grovelling to do with these people.
(pointedly)
You didn't exactly charm Karen Bauer.

MICHAEL
I was punting.

BARRY
(can't help jumping in)
You've got to saddle up here, Michael, and get this under control.

MICHAEL
Saddle up?

BARRY
He needs to be under a doctor's care immediately. He needs to be admitted.

MICHAEL
Where?

BARRY
Does it matter?

MARTY
Michael...
(the voice of reason)
U/North needs to know that he's under control. That he's in a facility. They've been shaken up, they need to be reassured.

MICHAEL
It's just not gonna be that easy.

BARRY
Why the hell not?

MICHAEL
Because the laws in the State Of New York set a pretty high threshold for involuntary commitment.

BARRY
Did you see this fucking tape?

MICHAEL
I'm not arguing with you, Barry, I'm telling you how it is.

MARTY
You know what? We've got six hundred attorneys in this building. Let's find out which one of them knows the most about psychiatric commitment statues.

MICHAEL
I can tell you that right now.
(beat)
It's Arthur.

83 EXT. TIMES SQUARE -- NIGHT 83

ARTHUR walking through the neon canyon. Bathing in the miracle of it all. His eyes seem locked open, gathering stimuli faster than the speed of light. Every moment -- every beatific instant -- has a purpose. Everything is fuel for the significance turbine spinning inside him. He slows his pace, hesitates for a moment and --

84 EXT. ARTHUR'S TIMES SQUARE POV -- NIGHT 84

DIAMOND VISION BILLBOARD -- a familiar logo -- green -- deeper green -- brighter green -- a riot of green and --

u/north
we grow your world together

85 EXT. TIMES SQUARE -- NIGHT 85

ARTHUR stalled there. Taking this in. Factoring it into his mental miracle machine. Smiling. As we hear --

IKER (RADIO/OVER)
"Okay. I'm in. We're good to go."

ARTHUR starting move again, as --

86 EXT. TIMES SQUARE -- NIGHT 86

THE CAMERA FINDS -- VERNE fifty yards behind ARTHUR. Tailing him. Looking like just another nightcrawler doing the cell phone walk-and-talk --

VERNE
(into his microphone)
"Roger that. Let's keep a radio check every five, okay?"

87 INT. ELEVATOR LANDING/ARTHUR'S LOFT -- NIGHT (CONT) 87

A downtown building. IKER standing at the door to Arthur's loft. Backpack. Tool kit. Same radio/cellphone rig. Gloved hands, already starting to work the lock, as --

IKER
(into his microphone)
"Every five. Roger that."

88 INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM -- NIGHT 88

Clean, slick bachelor decor. MICHAEL with a towel wrapped at his waist, sits at the edge of the bed, speed dialing a mobile phone. The sheets with an apres-sex chaos about them.

ARTHUR'S VOICE
(his answering machine)
"You've reached Arthur. If you wish to leave a message, please do so after the tone."

MICHAEL hangs up before the beep.

BRINI (OS)
(from the kitchen)
You want me to heat it up?

MICHAEL
(calling back)
Doesn't matter.

89 INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT/KITCHEN -- NIGHT (CONT) 89

BRINI GLASS -- the young lawyer we met in the elevator at Kenner, Bach -- is busy reheating a Chinese takeout dinner that was obviously interrupted earlier. She's wearing nothing but one of Michael's shirts.

It's a modern, one-bedroom apartment in a high-rise that towers over Columbus Avenue. The kitchen open to the living room. Windows to Central Park and The Westside twenty stories below. A slick pad. Small but clean, furnished efficiently, and the view is sharp.

BRINI starts the microwave. There's a roach in an ashtray on the counter. She lights it. Taking a drag, as MICHAEL wanders in from the bedroom.

BRINI
(the joint)
You want?

He waves it off. Coming around behind her. Kissing her neck as he moves to the refrigerator.

MICHAEL
Now you're hungry...

BRINI
I know.

There's an open bottle of white wine. He's pouring.

MICHAEL
You never told me you were working with Jeff Gaffney.

BRINI
It's just a project.
(pulling plates from the cupboard--)
He hates you. You know that, right?

MICHAEL
There's a heartbreaker.

BRINI
You helped him out, didn't you?

MICHAEL
Jeff Gaffney hates everyone.

BRINI
What did you do for him?

MICHAEL
I don't even remember.

BRINI
That is such bullshit...

He just smiles. She tries the wine. Some subtle tension pulling at her. And the dope didn't get her where she wanted.

BRINI
I watch these people. At the office. How they relate to you. I can always tell, or I think I can anyway, the ones that you've done something for.

MICHAEL
Half of them don't even know I work there.

BRINI
Or they're pretending to ignore you, or else they're super polite...

MICHAEL
Or they hate me.

He looks at her. She looks away.

BRINI
I never know what you know or don't know.

MICHAEL
Try me.

BRINI
They offered me London.
(awkward beat)
Or did you know that already?

MICHAEL
No. I didn't know that.

BRINI
I wasn't sure.

MICHAEL
So this is the merger.

BRINI
I can't believe you don't know all this.
(trying to laugh it off--)
Well, there you go... I'm blown. There's my big secret.

MICHAEL
I thought I was your secret.

BRINI
Really? I always thought it was the other way around.

The microwave starts beeping.

MICHAEL
I was gonna say when were you gonna tell me, but I guess that's what you're doing.

BRINI
I really thought you knew.

MICHAEL looks away. Something catching his eye.

THERE ON THE COUNTER

"REALM AND CONQUEST." Book One. The red cover. MICHAEL picking it up. A momentary distraction.

BRINI
I haven't decided yet either.
(trying a smile)
Seriously. Nothing's been decided.

She's waiting for him to answer. He hesitates. Puts the book down.

MICHAEL
Jeff Gaffney's wife starts this affair with their contractor in East Hampton. It takes about a month, the guy realizes she's crazy, he tries to break it off. She gets drunk. She drives out to his house, takes a road flare and tries to torch his truck. She's just so fucked up she doesn't see the two Dominican kids sleeping in the garage. One guy it turned out okay. The other one needed a lot of help.

Was that a gift or a bomb? Neither of them sure.

BRINI
Jesus...
(staring at him)
How do you make something like that disappear?
(off his silence)
I guess you don't.

MICHAEL drains his wine. Pouring another, as --

90 EXT. COLUMBUS CIRCLE -- NIGHT 90

COLUMBUS CIRCLE. ARTHUR EDENS marching through the night. Same glorious smile. Just another madman loose in Manhattan.

91 INT. ARTHUR'S LOFT -- NIGHT 91

A DIGITAL CAMERA LCD SCREEN. THE IMAGE -- an overhead shot of a coffee table cluttered with magazines, newspapers and junk mail.

THE DIGITAL CAMERA is sitting on THE ACTUAL COFFEE TABLE. IKER, wearing gloves and a hair net, is very precisely and

quickly searching through the debris. A consummate professional at work. As he proceeds, he keeps checking the camera image to make sure every object is returned to its original position.

This is raw space. A box. High ceilings. Industrial windows along one wall. Half-assed groupings of furniture define the space: Bed and dresser, desk and computer, bathroom and closets framed out along the far walls. The decor is odd. Half the stuff is clearly from a previous life; Eastside antiques, proper rugs, generic oil landscapes piled carelessly around. Above all this, the clutter of Arthur's recent manic acquisitions -- books, papers, found objects, curios -- as if a layer of madness were blanketing the landscape of his old life.

IKER MOVING THROUGH THE LOFT -- eyes scanning -- barely reacting as -- THE PHONE RINGS -- and he begins to hear:

ARTHUR'S VOICE
(on the answering machine)
"If you wish to leave a message, please do so after the tone."
(beep, and then--)

MICHAEL'S VOICE
(through the machine)
Arthur, look, I've been calling all day, if you're there, please for crissake just pick up and talk to me...
(continuing as--)

92 INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM -- NIGHT 92

BRINI alone in bed. Deep asleep.

MICHAEL (PHONE/OVER)
No? Yes? Shit, come on, man...
(a weary beat)
Arthur, listen to me, I'm leaving my phone on -- we have to talk...
(continuing, as--)

93 INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT 93

MICHAEL in the dark with the phone and a new bottle of wine.

MICHAEL
...what happened this morning -- yesterday morning -- whatever it is -- forget it, okay? Someday we'll laugh about it, right? But you gotta get back to me here, okay? And soon.
(about to hang up, when--)
(MORE)

MICHAEL (cont'd)
Arthur, look...I'll tell you what -- because you said it yourself -- part of this is definitely madness, right?

94 EXT. COLUMBUS AVENUE -- NIGHT 94

ARTHUR walking uptown. VERNE close behind him --

MICHAEL (PHONE/OVER)
...There's a chemical part of this, and you know it, and I know it, and if you're ready to start with that, then I'm more than willing to meet you halfway and cop to the fact that, yes, the situation sucks. The case sucks. Agtek sucks. We can start with that...

95 INT. ARTHUR'S LOFT/BATHROOM -- NIGHT 95

IKER with the medicine cabinet open. There must be forty prescriptions jammed in here and he's checking every single one, as he listens to --

MICHAEL'S VOICE
(on the answering machine)
...You hear me, Arthur? Pick up the goddam phone.
(silence)
I'm telling you you're right, okay? About what we are. I'm saying you're crazy -- the behavior's completely out of control -- but you're right. You called it. We're janitors. Okay? I get it...

96 INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT 96

MICHAEL
...but we came to this, Arthur, we had choices. And it didn't happen overnight. And you can't just suddenly say, "Hey, sorry. Game over. I'm into miracles now."
(suddenly)
Goddamit, Arthur, pick up the fucking phone and talk to me! Whatever the hell else you think is so important right now, you better let me help you on this, because I'm telling you straight up here, janitor to janitor, I don't see anybody else with a broom on the horizon.
(one last hopeful pause, before, "beep"--)

MACHINE VOICE
"The answering disc is currently full.
Please try your call again later."

MICHAEL left hanging. He puts down the phone. Drains his wine glass. Stands at the window.

97 INT./EXT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT POV -- NIGHT 97

THE HAYDEN PLANETARIUM. Far below. The huge glass box. The bright shining dome. The planets.

98 EXT. WEST 81ST STREET -- NIGHT 98

Same moment. Five hundred yards below Michael's apartment. ARTHUR on the sidewalk, stopped there, staring in at the significant cosmic majesty of the planetarium. Everything in orbit.

99 INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN -- DAY 99

Cold, rural Wisconsin. A tired old room in a tired old house. A WALL PHONE RINGING. BIG SISTER, the Farmer's Wife, hauling a baby on her hip as she moves to answer it. THE FARMER and YOUNG DAUGHTER sitting over breakfast in the BG.

BIG SISTER
(grabbing the phone)
Hello?

ARTHUR/PHONE
Is Anna there?

BIG SISTER
Hang on...
(calling into the house)
Where's Anna?
(continuing, as--)

100 EXT. TRIBECA STREET -- DAY (CONT) 100

Same time. A PANEL TRUCK parked here. It's a scuffed-up, late model vehicle. Some half-assed electrical supply logo buried beneath the graffiti. About as anonymous as it gets.

BIG SISTER (PHONE/OVER)
"...Anna! Where is she? ANNA!"

101 INT. THE PANEL TRUCK -- DAY (CONT) 101

Surprise. Welcome to a perfect mobile, urban surveillance HQ. Ugly and state-of-the-art. Purely functional. Nothing Gucci about it. A cot. Tool cases. Cooler. Folding table.

Couple laptops. Space heater. IKER just now clambering in the back door. VERNE wearing headphones, already plugged in, waving for him to hurry up --

BIG SISTER (PHONE/OVER)
"-- Anna, you got a phone call!"

VERNE flipping switches, pulling his laptop closer --

102 INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN -- DAY (CONT) 102

ANNA KYSURSEN grabbing the phone as she comes by, pulling the cord as far as she can, making sure BIG SISTER is out of earshot before she answers --

ANNA
(finally)
Hello?

ARTHUR (PHONE)
Anna? Hi. It's Arthur...

ANNA
Hey.

ARTHUR (PHONE)
Did you sleep?

ANNA
I guess.

103 INT. ARTHUR'S LOFT -- DAY (CONT) 103

ARTHUR pacing with the phone --

ARTHUR
Did you think about what we said?

ANNA (PHONE)
Yeah.

ARTHUR
You didn't tell anybody, did you?

INTERCUTTING NOW -- FARMHOUSE/LOFT

ANNA
No.
(eyes to the kitchen)
My sister's spying on me but that's normal.

ARTHUR
Because I meant what I said.

ANNA
I know, it's just there's like four-hundred and fifty people in this lawsuit, why are you choosing me?

ARTHUR
I don't know. I'm crazy, right?

ANNA
(laughing)
That's for sure...

ARTHUR
Does it matter, Anna? I mean, really? I needed a river to surrender to and you were there. Isn't that enough?

ANNA smiles. No one's ever spoken to her like this before.

ARTHUR
Isn't it? Isn't that what you wait for? To find someone, and they're like a lens and suddenly you're looking through them and everything's changed. Nothing can ever be the same again...
(he's rattling on, but--)

BIG SISTER (OS)
(sharply, from behind)
Who're you talking to?

ANNA wheels around. BIG SISTER standing in the pantry door. Sour look in her eye. Squirming kid on her hip.

FARMER
You're gonna tie up the phone all night, we got a right to know.

ANNA
It's for me, okay? I get calls too!

ANNA pulling the phone wire as far as it goes, disappearing into a back stairwell. Closing the door behind her, as --

104 INT. THE PANEL TRUCK -- DAY (CONT) 104

Silence. VERNE and IKER listening to the continuing conversation over headphones. AUDIO LIGHTS on the equipment rising and falling as Arthur and Anna keep talking.

105 INT. COFFEE SHOP -- DAY 105

Breakfast. ZABEL, the loanshark, alone here with --

MICHAEL
I can get you twelve on Monday.

ZABEL
Twelve is weak. Twelve looks bad.

MICHAEL
How do you figure that?

ZABEL
They look at seventy-five. They look at you. They're wondering what the problem is. Now you say twelve. That's just gonna make people nervous.

MICHAEL
Gabe, this was the day before yesterday, okay? Let me get my ducks in a row here.

ZABEL
Go to the bank. You got the apartment. You refinance.

MICHAEL
I did that three months ago.

Big news. A nasty pause. ZABEL with the polygraph stare.

ZABEL
You back at the tables?

MICHAEL
Oh yeah, like I need the action. I don't have enough going on.
(the very idea)
I hope you're kidding.

ZABEL
He finds out you're playing cards with his money. There's no dialogue after that.

MICHAEL
So much for Old Time's Sake, huh?

ZABEL
Do everyone a favor. Get out the treasure map and start digging. You got a week.

ZABEL walks. MICHAEL sitting there wondering if he's as fucked as he feels. Yes.

106 INT. MARTY BACH'S TOWNHOUSE/FOYER -- DAY 106

JENNY BACH leading MICHAEL in from the foyer. She's late thirties. Pure trophy. Blonde, horsey, peppy.

JENNY
(walk and talk)
He's been on the phone all morning.
What else is new, right?

TWO SIX-YEAR OLDS running wild in the background --

JENNY
Jamie! No running in the kitchen!
(calling to some unseen babysitter--)
Soroya! Are you watching them?
(back to Michael)
He's upstairs, he's taken over the living room...
(pointing the way)
Go for it. Soroya!
(kids getting wilder in the background now--)
Don't you just love Saturday morning?

107 INT. TOWNHOUSE LIVING ROOM -- DAY 107

The grand parlor floor. Everything perfect except for the TWO DOZEN DOCUMENT BOXES piled around the room. On the side of each box, the word EDENS and a number. MARTY poring over paperwork.

MICHAEL
Marty...

MARTY turns back. Focuses.

MARTY
You know what he's doing? He's making their case...
(the boxes)
I'm going through his files, I'm reading this...he's building a case against U/North.

MICHAEL
No one's gonna let him do that.

MARTY
Let him?
(furious)
Who's gonna stop him? You know what
(MORE)

MARTY (cont'd)
I just heard? He's calling these plaintiffs now -- this woman from the deposition? -- he's calling these people -- he's got these discovery documents stashed away here...
(he's stunned)
It's a fucking nightmare. I've been trying him all morning, you can't even leave a message, he's got the whole machine jammed up.

MICHAEL watching him pull another bunch of files from a box.

MICHAEL
(something on the floor)
Is that his briefcase?

MARTY
Yeah. Why?

MICHAEL
We've been looking for it.

MARTY
I don't know. It came up with all the stuff from his office.
(lying effortlessly)
You can't believe the crap he's got stashed away in here.

MICHAEL nods. Accepting this. Plus there's another agenda he'd like to get to here.

MICHAEL
So, Marty, look, I'm kind of in a spot here.
(Marty focuses)
I need a loan. I need eighty grand.

MARTY hesitates.

MARTY
I thought you were done with all that.

MICHAEL
It's not the cards. Nothing like that. It's the restaurant.

MARTY
Eighty thousand?

MICHAEL
I didn't mean to jump you like this. I've been trying to get a meeting with
(MORE)

MICHAEL (cont'd)
you alone now for two weeks.
(just going for it)
And I know about the merger. Whether I'm supposed to know or not.

MARTY
Nothing's final.

MICHAEL
That's why I'm asking now. You're my meal ticket, Marty. I mean, let's face it, once this is out of your hands, I'm screwed. You'll be cashed out and I'll be staring at Barry and a bunch of strangers trying to explain what the hell it is I do.

MARTY
Everybody knows how valuable you are, Michael. Everybody who needs to know.

MICHAEL
I'm forty-five. I'm broke. I've been riding shotgun for twelve years and I still don't have any equity. Excuse me if I don't feel reassured.

MARTY
Nobody told you to go into the bar business.

MICHAEL
I only opened the place so I'd have a way out.

MARTY
I had no idea you were so unhappy.

MICHAEL
C'mon, Marty...
(pushing down his temper)
How many times have I asked you to let me get back on a litigation team. How many times?

MARTY
Anybody can go to court. You think that's so special?

MICHAEL
I was good at it.

MARTY
So what? So are a lot of people. At this -- what you do -- at this, you're great. For crissake, Michael, you have what everybody wants; you have a niche. You made a place, you made this niche for yourself. And if it's nostalgia -- "Oh, you should've seen me when I was a D.A. back in Queens." -- then let me give you a serious piece of advice: Leave it there. God forbid you're not as good as you remember. Because I've seen that happen too.

MICHAEL
But I didn't come for advice, did I?

MARTY
So this is what? Quid pro quo?

MICHAEL
What do you mean?

MARTY
I give you the loan or you don't help out with Arthur?

MICHAEL
I never said that.

MARTY
Maybe you should. Because this...
(Arthur's papers)
This is cancer. This is something we don't get it reined-in and cleaned up soon, everything's vulnerable. Everything.

MICHAEL
What're you telling me?

MARTY
That I'm counting on you.
(the grand gesture)
I'm telling you that by this time next week Arthur will be under control and everyone who needs to, will have been reminded of your infinite value.

MICHAEL
Jesus, Marty...

MARTY suddenly smiling. Good cheer blossoming.

MARTY
And when the fuck did you get so delicate?

MICHAEL left hanging, no chance to respond, because here come THE KIDS -- running up the stairs -- SQUEALING AND SCREAMING -- chasing each other into the room and --

MARTY
-- there you are! --
(making a playful grab--)
-- into the lion's den! -- gotcha! --

MICHAEL standing there rocked, as MARTY starts roaring at the kids and they start squealing even louder and --

108 EXT. TRIBECA STREET/DOOR TO ARTHUR'S LOFT -- DAY 108

THE BUILDING DIRECTORY. Five apartments. One per floor. Five names -- one of them EDENS. Buzzer. Intercom.

MICHAEL pressing the buzzer for the umpteenth time. And again. And nothing. He tries the door. And it's loose. But then he stops. Stepping back. Fuck it.

Glancing back up to the third floor windows as he crosses the street and --

109 INT. THE LEXUS -- DAY 109

A minute later. HENRY reading as MICHAEL gets back in.

HENRY
Why don't you just call Uncle Gene and get the cops to help you?

MICHAEL
It's not that kind of problem.

HENRY
How much longer are we doing this?

MICHAEL
I don't know.

110 EXT. TRIBECA STREETS -- DAY 110

Half hour later. THE LEXUS cruising Tribeca.

111 **EXT. TRIBECA STREET -- DAY** 111

Later. THE LEXUS double parked. MICHAEL walking back to the car. Another dead-end.

112 **INT. THE LEXUS -- DAY (CONT)** 112

MICHAEL getting in. HENRY looks up from his book.

HENRY
Is it a stakeout if you're driving around, or do you just have to stay in one place?

MICHAEL
I don't know.

HENRY
You could've been a cop if you wanted, right?

MICHAEL
(pulling out slowly)
It's not the hardest job in the world to get.

HENRY
But Uncle Gene's a supercop, right?

MICHAEL
Yeah, that's a little tougher.

HENRY
We're never gonna get to the movies, are we?

MICHAEL
Hang on, Henry --
(something up ahead--)

HENRY
-- and we can't go tomorrow because we have go upstate, so this is--
(startled as--)

MICHAEL whips the car up the block -- tucking it in --

MICHAEL
(already jumping out--)
-- stay right here -- lock the doors --
I'll be right back --

113 EXT. TRIBECA STREET -- DAY (CONT) 113

MICHAEL running up the block and --

114 INT. THE PANEL TRUCK (CONT) 114

VERNE alone at the console --

IKER (RADIO)
"-- here comes that guy again -- just passing you now --"

There -- ON ONE OF THE LAPTOPS -- MICHAEL jogging past some low-res surveillance camera as --

115 EXT. TRIBECA CORNER -- DAY (CONT) 115

ARTHUR coming up the street. Walking briskly. In his arms he's cradling twenty-five fresh baguettes. A bit blinded by all the bread, he's caught off guard by --

MICHAEL
(standing in his way)
Arthur.

ARTHUR
Whoaa...
(almost losing his loaves--)
Michael. Jesus. You scared me.

MICHAEL
Making a delivery?

ARTHUR
No...
(smiling)
Very funny. Nothing like that...
(as if it were all completely natural and needed no further explanation--)
Have one...go on...really...
(offering)
It's still warm. Best bread I've ever had in my life.

MICHAEL suddenly holding warm French bread.

MICHAEL
So welcome home.

ARTHUR
I know. The hotel. I'm sorry. I was getting a little overwhelmed.

MICHAEL
But you're feeling better now?

ARTHUR
Yes. Definitely. Much better.

MICHAEL
Just not enough to call me back.

ARTHUR hesitant. Straining to keep the mania down.

ARTHUR
I wanted to organize my thoughts. Before I called. That's what I've been doing.

MICHAEL
And how's that going?

ARTHUR
Good. Very good. I just...
(fighting the flood)
I need to be more precise. That's my goal.
(he smiles)
Speak softly and carry a big baguette.

There's a beat. Their history rushing in around them.

MICHAEL
As good as this feels, you know where it goes.

ARTHUR
No. You're wrong. What feels so good is not knowing where it goes.

MICHAEL
How do I talk to you, Arthur? So you hear me? Like a child? Like a nut? Like everything's fine? What's the secret? Because I need to make sure you hear me.

ARTHUR
I hear everything.

MICHAEL
Then hear this: You need help. Before this gets too far, you need help. You've got great cards here. You keep your clothes on, you can pretty much do any goddamn thing you want. You want out? You're out. You wanna bake bread? Go with God. There's one wrong answer in the whole pile and there you are with your arms around it.

ARTHUR
I said I was sorry.

MICHAEL
You thought the hotel was overwhelming? You keep pissing on this case, they're gonna cut you off at the knees.

ARTHUR
I don't know what you're talking about.

MICHAEL
I'm out there trying to cover for you! I'm telling people everything's fine, you're gonna be fine, everything's cool. I'm out there running this Price-Of-Genius speech for anybody who'll listen and I get up this morning and I find out you're calling this girl in Wisconsin and you're messing with documents and God knows what else and --

ARTHUR
How can you know that?

MICHAEL
-- they'll take everything -- your partnership, the equity --

ARTHUR
How do you know who I call?

MICHAEL
-- they'll pull your license!

ARTHUR
HOW DO YOU KNOW I CALLED ANNA?

MICHAEL
From Marty! You're denying it?

ARTHUR
How does he know?

MICHAEL
I don't know. I don't give a shit.

ARTHUR stepping back. Flushed. Paranoia rising.

ARTHUR
You're tapping my phones.

MICHAEL
(it's to weep)
Jesus, Arthur...

ARTHUR
Explain it! Explain how Marty knows.

MICHAEL
You chased this girl through a parking lot with your dick hanging out! You don't think she got off the phone with you and speed-dialed her lawyer?

ARTHUR
She wouldn't do that. I know that.

MICHAEL
Really. You think your judgement is state-of-the-art right now?
(before he can step away)
They're putting everything on the table here. You need to stop and think this through. I will help you think this through. I will find someone to help you think his through. Don't do this. You're gonna make it easy for them.

ARTHUR draws himself up. We saw a glimpse of this in Milwaukee. The teeth. The shark beneath the breadloaves.

ARTHUR
I have great affection for you, Michael, and you lead a very rich and interesting life, but you're a bagman not an attorney. If your intention was to have me committed, you should've kept me in Wisconsin where the arrest record, videotape, and eyewitness accounts of my inappropriate behavior had jurisdictional relevance. I have no criminal record in the State of New York and the crucial determining
(MORE)

ARTHUR (cont'd)
criteria for involuntary commitment is danger: "Is the defendant a danger to himself or others." You think you've got the horses for that? Good luck and God bless. But I'll tell you this, the last place you want to see me is in court.

ARTHUR muscles up his bread. He's leaving.

MICHAEL
I'm not the enemy.

ARTHUR
Then who are you?

And he's walking. MICHAEL almost calling after him. Then not. Then nothing. Just sort of frozen there. Standing on the sidewalk with a baguette in his hand and a great variety of failures arranging themselves around his heart.

HENRY (OS)
Dad?

MICHAEL startled. The boy behind him.

MICHAEL
What're you doing?

HENRY
You're just standing there...

MICHAEL
I told you to stay in the car.

HENRY
I know, but...
(he's got a newspaper)
...it's just if we left now we could still probably make a four-thirty show because we didn't know it, but it's playing at Twenty-Third street too...

MICHAEL glances back. Arthur is gone.

MICHAEL
Okay...
(jump starting it for the kid--)
You're sure? Lemme see that...

HENRY brightening, handing over the paper, as we --

116 EXT. HILTON HOTEL GYM -- NIGHT 116

A glass box. Like an aquarium from this distance. It's empty this late, one lonely runner pounding a treadmill. As MUSIC -- this catchy, electronic pulsing theme -- starts playing, and if it sounds a little like a jingle, that's okay, because it is --

CHORAL VOICES
"...we grow your world together...we grow your world together...we grow your world together..."

And then, just as THE MUSIC starts to fade out, it begins again from the top, CONTINUING AGAIN, as we --

117 INT. NEW YORK HILTON GYM -- NIGHT 117

It's KAREN on the treadmill. Running in place. And THE MUSIC, that electronic pulse, RISING and FALLING and --

CHORAL VOICES
"...we grow your world together...we grow your world together..."
(over and over, as we--)

118 INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT 118

HENRY teaching MICHAEL how to play Realm and Conquest -- the game version of the story Henry's been talking about. PLAYING CARDS spread across a glass table. Each card a portrait -- ORCS, MAGES, RIVERWYNDERS, etc. -- complete with descriptions, numbers, code-colors, etc. And THE AGTEK JINGLE just bubbling along in the BG, as --

HENRY
So you want to play something red...

MICHAEL
Blood Engine?

HENRY
Save that one. Play that, Red Rain...

MICHAEL doing as he's told. As we hear --

CHORAL VOICES
"...we grow your world together...we grow your world together..."
(starting over, as we--)

119 INT. THE PANEL TRUCK -- NIGHT 119

VERNE and IKER at the console listening over headphones.

IKER
What the hell is he doing?

VERNE
We should've put a camera in there.

120 INT. ARTHUR'S LOFT -- NIGHT 120

A TELEVISION SCREEN. A U/NORTH COMMERCIAL. One of those huge, ambiguous, corporate feel-good spots. THE MUSIC playing over a series of comforting utopian images -- fields of wheat -- little league diamonds -- backyard picnics and...

CHORAL VOICES
"...we grow your world together...we grow your world together..."

Except this time it finishes. Image freezing. Silence.

ARTHUR standing in the middle of the room. He's got two remote controls in his hand. One goes to the VCR where he's just frozen the U/NORTH COMMERCIAL in it's final frame, the other controls the cassette deck on the stereo. He's replaying the video over and over to make an audio loop of the U/North theme music. ZAP -- he's rewinding the VCR. ZAP -- he's pausing the cassette deck. ZAP -- he stopping the VCR. ZAP -- he's hitting "record" and --

121 INT. HILTON HOTEL HALLWAY -- NIGHT 121

KAREN leaving the gym. Sweaty. Arms loaded with paperwork. Trudging toward the elevators. As THE U/NORTH MUSIC STARTS AGAIN, except now, we also hear:

ARTHUR (V.O.)
"The combination of Calcitrate with certain unstable nitrogen-based fertilizers still currently in use, has the potential to release toxic particulates in concentrations significant enough to cause human tissue damage..."
(continuing, as--)

122 INT. ARTHUR'S LOFT -- NIGHT 122

ARTHUR in mid-broadcast. Reading MEMO #229 into the phone. The pre-recorded U/NORTH MUSIC blasting from the stereo and --

ARTHUR
...Field studies using Calcitrate as a manually-delivered defoliant were conducted to determine the range of conditions under which such toxic particulate compounds would form...

123 INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT 123

HENRY crashed on the couch. MICHAEL watching his son sleep.

ARTHUR (V.O.)
"...the combination of poor drainage, severe cold, and/or spillage due to human error, created a tolerance for the type of retro-caking most likely to create a potentially toxic area..."

124 INT. THE PANEL TRUCK -- NIGHT 124

Emergency. Arthur's reading of the memo has spiked the urgency level in here by a thousand percent. IKER working the console. VERNE speed-dialing a cell phone, as --

ARTHUR (V.O.)
"...while Calcitrate's effectiveness as a defoliant is undiminished by the presence of these fertilizers..."

125 INT. KAREN'S HILTON HOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT 125

THE PHONE RINGING as the door opens. KAREN juggling her paperwork and sweat clothes, rushing to grab it, as we hear --

ARTHUR (V.O.)
"...further studies and cost/benefit analyses need to concentrate on this possible hazardous contraindication..."

126 EXT. SIXTH AVENUE -- NIGHT 126

Empty midnight. KAREN wearing sweat clothes beneath a coat. Clutching a pair of headphones to her ears, listening to --

ARTHUR (V.O.)
"...chemical modification to stabilize the polymer chain causing this problem, while theoretically possible, would require a top-down retooling of the manufacturing process. Those costs, while assumed to be significant, were not the subject of the study summarized here..."

VERNE standing beside her. It's his Walkman. He brought the tape. Waiting for her to finish listening.

ARTHUR (V.O.)
"...clearly, the release of these internal research documents would compromise the effective marketing of Calcitrate and must be kept within the protective confines of United-Northfield's trade secret language."

And it's done. KAREN takes off the headphones. Hands them back to VERNE. She's dazed. She looks ill.

VERNE
It seemed to warrant...

KAREN
Yes.

An awkward beat. People, cars...life going by.

KAREN
This just...whatever you do...you have to contain this.

VERNE
Contain?

KAREN
Right. That's my question. Short of...whatever else...something more. What's the option for something along those lines?

VERNE
You're talking about paper? The data?

KAREN
That there's a more limited option, is what I'm asking...
(cold sweat fumbling)
Something I'm not thinking of.

VERNE
We deal in absolutes.

KAREN
Okay. I understand. I do.

VERNE
The materials, I'm not a lawyer, we try. We do what we can.

KAREN
And the other way?

VERNE
Is the other way.

Heavy pause. Life passing all around them.

KAREN
But you think it's doable.

VERNE
We have some good ideas. You say move, we move. The moment our ideas don't look so good, we back off and reassess.

KAREN
Okay.

VERNE
You mean okay, you understand? Or okay, proceed?
(silence)
Maybe you want to bring Don in on it.

KAREN
No.
(on that she's sure)
Don's not in this. He's busy. It's got nothing to do with Don.

VERNE nods. But hanging. Where are they? Still waiting for an answer, as --

127 EXT. SUBDIVISION RANCH HOUSE -- DAY 127

Just another half-acre in an ageing 60's housing development. THE LEXUS parked in the driveway.

A DOZEN VOICES (OVER)
Happy Birthday to you. Happy birthday to you. Happy birthday dear, Pappy...
(continuing, as we--)

128 INT. RANCH HOUSE/DINING ROOM -- DAY 128

A cop's house. MICHAEL, HENRY and a dozen members of the Clayton tribe, singing to RAYMOND, 75, the withered, widower, patriarch of this clan.

A DOZEN VOICES
...happy Birthday to you!!!

STEPHANIE, Michael's older sister carrying the cake. She lives next door with three teenage kids, KAY, MARK and EAMON. Her husband, NORMAN, a simple guy who owns a bakery route.

STEPHANIE
Go on dad, make a wish...

RAYMOND
I get what I wish for, it'll kill me.

This gets a laugh. GENE, Michael's younger brother, is a Major Case Detective in Queens. His wife is MICHELLE. He's got two sons in tow, GREG, 16; EDDIE, 12. Grumpy jocks.

GENE
I don't know, Pap, if you're still wishing for it, you got a fighting chance.

RAYMOND smiles. Sends an emphysemic puff toward the candle. Doesn't quite get it. STEPHANIE to the rescue. So the candle's out. And now it's pass-the-plates, and who's having coffee, and how-do-you-like-it?, and Stephanie you're a saint for baking from scratch...

MICHELLE
(to husband Gene)
You have time for cake?

GENE
I'll take one to go.

STEPHANIE
Henry, honey...
(handing him the slice to pass--)
...can you?...that's for Uncle Gene.

HENRY handing GENE his cake to go and --

MICHAEL
You're going in?

GENE
I'm late already.

MICHAEL
Shit...

MICHELLE
(catching this)
You're not both running out.

MICHAEL
I got a situation...

GENE
What? You can't hang?

MICHAEL
You're going in.

GENE
I've got a shift.

MICHAEL
Yeah, well so do I.

GENE
C'mon man, you haven't been up here in months. Henry hasn't seen the boys, I don't even know when...
(quieter)
Just stay for an hour, the girls did all this stuff, he'll be asleep by then. Walk me out...

129 INT. RANCH HOUSE/PLAYROOM --DAY 129

Minute later. Downstairs off the garage. GENE changing shirts quick. Badge. Gun. As --

GENE
Timmy's been calling me. He's afraid to talk to you.

MICHAEL
He should be.

GENE
It closed out bad, right?

MICHAEL
Is that what he told you?

GENE
The kids are freaking out...his in-laws are freaking out...Pam can't stop crying long enough to start freaking out...

MICHAEL
Hey, she took him back...

GENE
So what? Fuck her and the kids?

MICHAEL
No, fuck Timmy.
(worked up now)
And nothing's closed, okay? I sold everything but the walls and we're still short. So don't talk to me about Pam and the kids. I've got my hands full. If it was you, he'd be in traction.

GENE
He's sick. It's a sickness.

MICHAEL
There's a fresh perspective.

GENE
I've seen a lot of people fall off the wagon lately. It's going around.

MICHAEL
Is that pointed at me?

GENE
When do I see you? How do I know what you're up to?

MICHAEL
I haven't bet a game in over a year. I haven't been in card room in ten months.

GENE
Okay...

MICHAEL
I gambled on the bar. I bet on Timmy and he wiped me out. That was my big play, okay? I put up my walk-away money and it's gone and I'm scrambling.

GENE
Okay... Cool down. I hear you.
(beat)
I'd be pissed off too.
(beat)
Just hang for an hour, okay?

MICHAEL nods. GENE already checking his watch. Brothers. Say no more. The everbroken truce.

130 INT. ARTHUR'S LOFT -- DAY 130

ARTHUR heading out -- pulling on his coat -- heading for the door -- checking for keys -- there -- grabbing them off the side table, as he opens the door and --

ZZZIPPP!!!!!

A TASER -- 25,000 volts -- from nowhere -- ARTHUR'S BODY clenching as it hits and --

WE'RE INTO ONE CONTINUOUS SHOT NOW

VERNE and IKER -- already flooding in -- gloves -- hairnets -- surgical boots -- like machines --

IKER -- the athlete -- perfect -- hands catching ARTHUR'S WRITHING BODY before it hits the floor and --

VERNE -- attack -- gloved hand thrusting down and --

ARTHUR'S FACE -- AEROSOL CAN -- VERNE'S HAND -- two quick bursts -- point blank -- words -- throat -- everything choked off -- eyes rolling and --

IKER -- the body drops -- ready for the dead weight and --

VERNE -- kicking shut the door -- back to the body and --

IKER
Ready and...

VERNE
Lift.

ARTHUR -- like a prop -- limp -- effortless -- IKER and VERNE flying him through the space -- this horrifying freight train pas de trois -- and so far this whole thing as taken *eighteen seconds* --

Heading like a freight train for --

THE LOFT BATHROOM -- here they come -- IKER walking backward holding ARTHUR'S SHOULDERS -- VERNE guiding him --

VERNE
Ready and...turn.

IKER shifting -- they're in -- *twenty six seconds* --

IKER
The coat.

VERNE
Hold him.

IKER strains -- VERNE works off Arthur's coat -- tossing it out of the bathroom and --

IKER
Let me just...

VERNE
Ready and...

IKER
Down.

ARTHUR sprawled across the bathroom floor and --

VERNE
(checking his watch)
We're good. Prep it.

IKER -- like a shot -- unlacing one of Arthur's boots and --

VERNE -- backpack off -- digging through it -- coming up with -- A PREPPED SYRINGE and --

IKER -- pulling off Arthur's sock and --

THE MEDICINE CABINET -- flying open -- VERNE searching -- knowing right where to look -- bingo -- BOTTLE -- BOTTLE -- BOTTLE -- pulling them down and --

IKER -- foot is bare -- reaching up -- *forty-one seconds* --

IKER
Bag, I need the wipe...

VERNE -- tossing the backpack -- scanning the pill bottles --

IKER -- coming out of the backpack with a pint of vodka and a sterile handkerchief and -- *forty-nine seconds* --

VERNE -- stripping open the syringe -- kneeling now and --

ARTHUR'S FACE -- gasping back to life -- he's coming to -- gagging now as IKER wipes the aerosol residue away from his mouth -- eyes twitching, as they start to open and --

IKER -- tense but controlled --

IKER
Better hit it.

ARTHUR'S BARE FOOT -- THE SYRINGE -- up -- in -- between the toes and --

VERNE -- as he plunges it home -- no hate -- no fear -- no pleasure -- nothing -- *sixty-seven seconds* and --

ARTHUR'S FACE -- as the eyes open -- just an instant -- catching the light -- these strange masked faces -- then gone -- just like that -- rolling away -- a little sigh -- a puff of air -- tongue thickening -- and then still and --

IKER
We good?

VERNE
(checking the pulse)
Hang on...

IKER
I'm gonna get the shoe back on.

VERNE
We're good.

And it's over. *Ninety seconds start to finish.*

131 INT. RANCH HOUSE/LIVING ROOM -- DAY 131

RANCH HOUSE LIVING ROOM. Early evening. Sunday television torpor. RAYMOND asleep in his chair. COUSINS watching a college basketball game. HENRY pulling on his coat, as --

The game cuts to commercial. AN AGTEK SPOT -- THE THEME -- there it is, pulsing away, as --

132 INT. RANCH HOUSE/KITCHEN -- DAY 132

The women -- MICHELLE, A NEIGHBOR, A NURSE -- sneaking smokes out the back door. MICHAEL with his coat on, huddled with --

STEPHANIE
That's his number. Dr. Moolian, see if you have any more luck --

MICHAEL
-- okay, let me get into it --

STEPHANIE
-- cause Medicaid, they've just been running us in circles with this.

MICHELLE
Let him go, Steph, he's got a date.

MICHAEL
Yeah, with a maniac attorney.

STEPHANIE
Take a night off. You look tired.

MICHAEL
One of these days...
(a kiss for each of them)
I gotta go...
(to Stephanie)
I'll call you this week, Steph, I promise. Thanks for today, okay?

STEPHANIE
Yeah, yeah, yeah. Drive safe.

MICHAEL smiles. Tough crowd. Heading off to find Henry. The two women, kitchen conspirators, share a look -- men, him, life -- the whole of existence summed up, as we --

133 EXT. RANCH HOUSE DRIVEWAY -- NIGHT 133

Two minutes later. MICHAEL and HENRY walking down to the Lexus. Coming around the car, when --

HENRY
Uncle Timmy?

MICHAEL turns and --

TIMMY
How you doing, Hen?

TIMMY standing there. Michael's cousin. A big guy that's been hollowed out by too much of everything. His bartender smile, a phony tic he can't quite control anymore.

MICHAEL
Get in the car, Henry.

HENRY hesitates. Then moving quickly to get into the car.

TIMMY
(before the door closes)
Good to see you, Henry.

MICHAEL
What do you want?

TIMMY
I've been sober eight days. I'm back at the meetings. I wanted you to know.

MICHAEL
In front of the kid?

TIMMY
Mikey, please, I know how bad I did. I swear. I don't know how to make it right, but it's all I think about.
(he's breaking)
What can I do? Tell me what to do.

MICHAEL getting in the car. Brick wall.

MICHAEL
Get Stephanie her tires back.

The car door slams shut. TIMMY folding. The shitty stoic tears of a wounded drunk.

134 INT. THE LEXUS -- DAY (CONT) 134

MICHAEL starting the car. HENRY very quiet.

MICHAEL
I'm sorry you have to see this, Hen.

MICHAEL slams the car in gear. HENRY can't help glancing out the back as they pull away.

HENRY
Is he crying?

MICHAEL
(tight)
I don't know.

HENRY
Because of drugs, right?

MICHAEL
That and everything else.

They drive in silence down the hill. MICHAEL focused on the road, trying to settle. Then he looks over, just now realizing how upset the boy really is and --

MICHAEL, suddenly he's stopping the car. Right there.

HENRY
What?

MICHAEL
Uncle Timmy -- and I mean this -- on his best day, he was never as tough as
(MORE)

MICHAEL (cont'd)
you. And I'm not talking about crying or the drugs. I'm talking about in his heart. You understand me?

HENRY caught in the focus of his father's sudden sincerity.

HENRY
Okay.

MICHAEL
Big Tim...Uncle Boss...all his charming bullshit. And I know you love him. And I know why. But when you see him like this, you don't have to be afraid, because that's not how it's gonna be for you. You're not gonna be one of those people who goes through life wondering why things keep falling out of the sky around them. You have some real steel in you Henry. Inside. I see it every time I look at you. I see it right now.
(he tries to smile)
I don't know where the hell you got it from, but you got it.

HENRY silent. Trying to get that down. As A CELL PHONE begins ringing. The moment broken as MICHAEL starts digging into his coat pockets and --

MICHAEL
(answering)
Hello...

And there's this just godawful pause. MICHAEL listening to some really bad news, as we --

135 EXT. SIXTH PRECINCT STATION HOUSE -- NIGHT 135

Est. Shot. Cops coming and going, as we hear:

DETECTIVE MONTES (V.O.)
...the neighbors came by, they're renovating the loft downstairs, they had water flooding down from his bathroom into their place...

136 INT. SIXTH PRECINCT SQUADROOM -- NIGHT 136

DETECTIVE PADILLA at his desk. Friendly. Sympathetic. MICHAEL sitting there. Seriously shaken.

DETECTIVE PADILLA
...his front door, fire escape, he had everything locked up pretty good. It took our guys ten minutes, they had to break the thing down. He had the perimeter alarm set. Pills all over the place. So just the scene alone, it's pretty definitive for suicide. Then I spoke to some of your partners, they ran down these problems he'd been having lately, so...

MICHAEL
Was there a note?

DETECTIVE PADILLA
No. They looked. There was paperwork all over the place -- walls and shit -- he had stuff up all over. But no note. Could be an accident. Or he was gonna write a note and just messed up...

MICHAEL
Can I get in there?

DETECTIVE PADILLA
His place? Not now. It's sealed. Once that seal goes up it's frozen. We're gonna try and reach his daughter, I guess, she's off in Europe, she's gotta come in, or the ME's gotta come back with a toxicology report. That's a couple weeks at least it's gotta stay like that. They bagged up, you know whatever valuables they saw, but...
(beat)
Sorry.

MICHAEL
Sure.

DETECTIVE PADILLA
I know your brother a little. My wife works in the ten-three out in Queens.

MICHAEL
I'll tell him hello.

DETECTIVE PADILLA
Something comes in, I'll get back to you.

MICHAEL
I appreciate it.

DETECTIVE PADILLA
Sorry for your loss.

MICHAEL nods. Stands. End of story.

137 EXT. CHELSEA SIDE STREET -- NIGHT 137

THE LEXUS pulls into a parking spot. MICHAEL getting out.

138 EXT. NEW YORK BAR -- NIGHT 138

BARRY pacing on a cell phone outside. He sees MICHAEL approaching and --

BARRY
(into the phone)
-- hang on -- just hang on --
(to Michael)
There you are...

BARRY finds a sad face. Throws out a hand. MICHAEL joins this little dance of grief.

BARRY
...we've been waiting for you...
they're all in there, I'll be in...

MICHAEL nods. Pulls away and --

139 INT. THE NEW YORK BAR -- NIGHT 139

Dark. Funky. Somebody's favorite joint. MARTY BACH and HALF-A-DOZEN OTHER ATTORNEYS clotted at the bar. These guys all partners at the firm. Everyone dressed in their Sunday night come-as-you-are tragedy clothes.

MICHAEL moves down the line. A grim, quiet gauntlet of mumbled hellos and handshakes. MARTY, truly grief-stricken, half-drunk, shaky as he comes off his stool to gather MICHAEL into his arms.

MARTY
(as they embrace)
...that stupid bastard...

MICHAEL
...I know...

MARTY
...what a thing...

MICHAEL
...makes no sense...I know...I can't believe it...

Finally they separate. Two wounded souls.

MARTY
I never even got to talk to him.

140 EXT. THE NEW YORK BAR -- NIGHT 140

BARRY still on his phone call --

BARRY
(pacing and talking--)
...I'm not gonna start negotiating against myself, if he's got a number he likes he's gonna have to back it up. I'm not getting Agtek all fired up if he doesn't have his people in line...

141 INT. NEW YORK BAR/BOOTH -- NIGHT 141

Forty-five minutes later. MICHAEL and MARTY alone now.

MICHAEL
Did I push too hard?

MARTY
Not a chance.

MICHAEL
I just couldn't get through to him.

MARTY
What? You scared him to death?
(ridiculous)
The King Of Toxic Torts? The man was a bull. Never happen.

MICHAEL
So why does he fold?

MARTY
It's got to be an accident. No note? Arthur without a note? Guy couldn't take a piss without leaving a memo. It has to be an accident.

MICHAEL
I don't get that either. One minute he's so pumped up he's gonna take on
(MORE)

MICHAEL (cont'd)
the world, twelve hours later he's sucking down pills? Why?

MARTY
Why? Because people are fucking incomprehensible. Why...
(waving the idea away)
You live this long, you're supposed to get something out of it. What did I get? I'm still horny and vain and afraid to die. What do I know about anything?
(he drinks)
Thirty years I know Arthur. Good years. And what I feel right now? If I'm honest? I can't even say it it's so awful.

MICHAEL
Say it.
(silence)
That we caught a lucky break?

MARTY looks over. Hesitates.

MARTY
We did, didn't we?

MICHAEL nods.

BARRY (OS)
Marty?

They turn. BARRY behind them.

BARRY
We need to get up to the office.

MARTY
They accepted?

BARRY
In principle. Don Jeffries wants us on the phone in half an hour.
(including Michael in this now--)
I tried to explain about Arthur. They're a little short on sympathy at this point.

MICHAEL
Wait a minute. Agtek's settling?

BARRY
They think there's a window. They want to try.
(just the messenger)
It's their show. What're we gonna do?

MICHAEL stunned. Silent.

MARTY
You did what you could, Michael. We all did.
(draining his drink)
It is what it is.

BARRY helping MARTY off the stool. Holding his coat.

BARRY
You need a ride?

MICHAEL
No. No, I'm okay.

MARTY with a misty wave good night. MICHAEL watching BARRY navigate the old man out toward the door, as --

142 INT. THE FARMHOUSE KITCHEN -- NIGHT 142

Dark. THE PHONE RINGING. ANNA'S BIG SISTER padding in, turning on a light and --

BIG SISTER
(answering)
Hello?

MICHAEL (PHONE/OVER)
I'm looking for Anna Kysersun?

BIG SISTER
Who is this?

143 EXT. THE NEW YORK BAR -- NIGHT 143

MICHAEL on the sidewalk --

MICHAEL/PHONE
My name is Michael Clayton. I'm an attorney in New York and I--

BIG SISTER/PHONE
Well you've got some nerve.

MICHAEL/PHONE
Excuse me?

BIG SISTER/PHONE
You get her all the way to New York and then leave her at the airport? This is not a complicated person! This is a girl who's never been farther away from home than Milwaukee!

144 INT. THE LEXUS -- NIGHT 144

MICHAEL driving, as we hear --

MICHAEL/PHONE V.O.
Wait a minute...

BIG SISTER/PHONE V.O.
No -- you wait! -- she's coming home tomorrow! -- and when she does, if you call here again, I'm warning you --

145 EXT. AIRPORT HOTEL/PARKING LOT -- NIGHT 145

La Guardia in the background. THE LEXUS pulling in as --

MICHAEL/PHONE V.O.
-- hang -- hang on -- wait -- are you saying she's in New York? -- she's in New York, right now?

BIG SISTER (PHONE/OVER)
This is a young girl! Do you hear me?

146 INT. FORD TAURUS/AIRPORT HOTEL PARKING LOT -- NIGHT 146

VERNE and IKER watching MICHAEL get out of the Lexus --

IKER
What the fuck is this?

147 INT. AIRPORT HOTEL HALLWAY -- NIGHT 147

Empty. Quiet. MICHAEL knocking on a door.

MICHAEL
Anna?
(knocking harder)
Anna?

ANNA (OS)
(through the door)
Who is it?

MICHAEL
Anna, my name is Michael Clayton. I'm a friend of Arthur's. I spoke to your sister and she told me you were here.

ANNA (OS)
Where's Arthur?

MICHAEL
I have some bad news, Anna. Can you open the door?
(silence)
Look, I'm gonna slip my card under the door and you can see who I am, okay?
(pulling his wallet--)

AS THE DOOR OPENS. ANNA standing there. A frightened small town girl in a strange place.

148 INT. FORD TAURUS -- NIGHT 148

VERNE and IKER as they were. In the dark. Not happy.

IKER
What're you thinking?

VERNE
I'll watch the door. Why don't you give his car a good once over?

IKER
(as he gets out)
How do I know I'm not getting home tomorrow?

149 INT. AIRPORT HOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT 149

ANNA sitting on the bed. Crying. MICHAEL in the room's only chair.

ANNA
...he didn't want to say exactly what it was, just that when I got here he would pick me up and show me and I would see that it was something that would win the whole case...even this morning I thought, okay, if I get to the airport and the ticket's not there, then I'll know, okay, you're stupid, now you can go home...but it was there and he paid like eight hundred dollars for a first class ticket, so I just, I got on the plane...I believed him...

MICHAEL there for her. Probing very gently here.

MICHAEL
You think maybe he was disappointed? Let's say he knew that you'd told somebody else about all this. You think that might've, in some crazy way, that he'd be disappointed by that?

ANNA
But I didn't.

MICHAEL
You must've told somebody.

ANNA
No. He made me promise.

MICHAEL
Nobody knew about this? You never told anybody?

ANNA
No...
(new tears welling)
He really was crazy, wasn't he?

MICHAEL without an answer for that. Watching her cry.

150 EXT. HUNDRED AND THIRD PRECINCT -- NIGHT 150

Queens. Midnight. Patrol cars parked outside. Couple cops changing shifts.

151 INT. QUEENS PRECINCT STORAGE ROOM -- NIGHT 151

NYPD ugly. GENE CLAYTON, shirtsleeves and shoulder holster, tearing through A HUGE OLD FILING CABINET. HANDS pulling open the drawers. One after the next. Searching through the clutter of blank forms and department stationery. MICHAEL waiting by the door.

GENE
(finally)
You talking about these?

He's holding a stack of PROTECTIVE CRIME SCENE SEALS.

MICHAEL
I only need one.

GENE
You know what this is?

MICHAEL
Yes.

GENE
You said a favor. This is more than a favor.

MICHAEL
Nobody's gonna know where it came from.

GENE
Are you that jammed up?

MICHAEL
What're you talking about?

GENE
It's the restaurant, right? One of these guys you owe? "Get me a seal."

MICHAEL
Do you really want to know?

GENE hesitates.

GENE
I'm gonna go take a leak. You'll probably be gone when I get back.
(he tosses the seals onto the table--)
You know your way out.

MICHAEL stands aside. GENE pushes past him and out the door. MICHAEL waiting for him to walk away, as --

152 EXT. TRIBECA STREET/ARTHUR'S BUILDING -- NIGHT 152

Two a.m. Dark and quiet.

153 EXT. ARTHUR'S BUILDING/FRONT DOOR -- NIGHT 153

MICHAEL with a crowbar. Pushing the door to the limits of the lock. Checking the street. Wedging the crowbar under the lock. Leaning. Now harder. And pushing, and...

SNAP. He's in.

154 INT. THE LANDING OUTSIDE ARTHUR'S LOFT -- NIGHT 154

THE DOOR TO ARTHUR EDEN'S LOFT. It's a mess. The metal frame is bent and splintered where the cops beat their way in. The original lock has been destroyed and replaced by a short length of chain-link held to a padlock that's been

screwed into the wall. A SEAL -- "Crime Scene Do Not Enter" -- plastered like a big bandaid across the door and frame.

MICHAEL standing there. Listening to the silence. In his hand, the seal he took from Gene. Framing it -- making sure he'll be able to replace it perfectly. He will. Now he's pulling the crowbar and --

155 INT. ARTHUR'S LOFT -- NIGHT 155

Dark. And then light, as THE DOOR falls open. MICHAEL at the threshold. Hesitating. Listening. Nervous. And then he steps in. Closing the door behind him, as --

156 EXT. SOMEONE'S POV -- ARTHUR'S WINDOWS -- NIGHT 156

As a light comes on in Arthur's loft.

157 INT. THE FORD TAURUS -- NIGHT (CONT) 157

VERNE and IKER. It's their POV. Two grim faces.

IKER
This just gets better and better.
(Verne just staring up at that window--)
What're we doing?

VERNE doesn't answer. Checks his watch. Looks back up to the window. Lots of ugly wheels turning, as --

158 INT. ARTHUR'S LOFT -- NIGHT 158

TIME CUTS -- MICHAEL searching -- moving quietly through the space. He's not really sure what he's looking for, so everything's important.

-- MICHAEL flipping through stacks of newspapers.

-- MICHAEL checking a pile of photography books.

-- MICHAEL at a wall covered with pictures of farms.

-- MICHAEL staring at the baguettes piled on a chair.

FINALLY TO

159 INT. ARTHUR'S LOFT/BATHROOM -- NIGHT 159

MICHAEL at the threshold. Knowing this is where it happened. Creeped out. Turning away and --

There on the floor. Arthur's coat.

MICHAEL kneeling to pick up the coat. Stopping suddenly. Something much more interesting there beside it --

"REALM AND CONQUEST" Book One. The red cover.

MICHAEL just stunned. Stalled. Confused.

CLOSE-UP -- THE BOOK as he begins to flip the pages. And we've never seen the text before. There are illustrations at the start of every chapter. Line drawings depicting the dramatic high points of an epic quest. Chapter One: The Blood Engine. Chapter Two: Exile of The Deserters. Chapter Three: Summons To Conquest.

Arthur has clearly read these first three chapters. Whole passages are underlined. Notes scrawled here and there in the margins. Pages folded back. And then --

A BOOKMARK falls out. Fluttering down to the floor.

MICHAEL reaches down to pick it up.

CLOSE-UP -- THE BOOKMARK. It's a receipt.

"COPY MASTERS -- YOUR ONE STOP FOR COPIES"

MICHAEL staring at the receipt. Then the book. Then the receipt. Then --

VOICE (OS)
Freeze! --

MICHAEL -- totally -- completely startled --

VOICE (OS)
(it's behind him)
-- right there asshole! -- get your hands up! -- now! -- NOW! --

MICHAEL -- okay -- don't shoot -- raise hands --

VOICE
(coming closer)
-- what's in your hand? -- drop it! --

MICHAEL
-- it's just -- it's a book! --

VOICE
-- drop it! -- turn around slowly! -- who else is here? --

MICHAEL drops the book. Turning around slowly as the SOUND OF A POLICE RADIO begins to rattle and --

TWO YOUNG NERVOUS POLICE OFFICERS -- guns drawn -- coming from the open door --

COP/VOICE
-- I said, who else is here? --

MICHAEL
-- nobody, I'm alone --

COP
(to his partner)
-- check in there -- these closets --
(to Michael)
You move I'll take your head off!

MICHAEL frozen like that and the TWO NERVOUS COPS circling around him and POLICE RADIO CHATTER rising and the big stink of a terrible mistake wafting through the air, as --

160 INT. SIXTH PRECINCT QUESTIONING ROOM -- EARLY MORNING 160

MICHAEL alone with a cold cup of coffee. Staring at himself in the one-way mirror. Waiting. Finally, THE DOOR opens --

DETECTIVE PADILLA
We need the room.

161 INT. SIXTH PRECINCT HALLWAY -- EARLY MORNING 161

PADILLA walking off. MICHAEL emerges from the questioning room. GENE waiting for him. Absolutely furious. He wants to scream but can't. Waiting for Montes to disappear --

GENE
So you know, I now owe this scumbag and his wife -- who's a total piece of shit in my unit -- now I owe them my balls for this.

MICHAEL
I'm sorry, Gene. You know I am.

GENE
"Nobody's gonna know it's me."
(you asshole)
You know what happens he doesn't bury this? That I gave you this thing?

MICHAEL
It's bad.

GENE
I'm eighteen months away from my twenty! You just put my pension in jeopardy!

MICHAEL
You made your point.

GENE
It's not a point!

MICHAEL
Who called 911?

GENE
What?

MICHAEL
The building's empty. I was quiet. I was there maybe six minutes. Who called it in? Does that make sense to you, that happening like--

GENE grabbing him -- jerking him close --

GENE
This never happened.

MICHAEL hesitates. Nods. Impatient -- he pushes back -- hard -- breaks Gene's grip. Brothers. Toe-to-toe.

GENE
All these cops think you're a lawyer. Then you got all these lawyers thinking you're some kind of cop. You've got everybody fooled, right? Everybody but you. You know exactly what you are.

MICHAEL just taking it. GENE backing away. Turning, and now he's walking... Gone.

162 EXT. VILLAGE STREET -- DAY 162

Morning. NYU Students swarming the sidewalks.

"COPY MASTERS -- YOUR ONE STOP FOR COPIES!"

163/164 INT. COPY MASTERS -- DAY 163/164

Big college operation. MICHAEL at the counter watching A COPY KID coming from the back with a heavy cardboard box. Straining it to the counter.

COPY KID
We tried to call like six times, I guess your answering machine is messed up or something. We took a shot...
(opening the box)
We ran out of red covers.
(handing one over)
We only had two thousand in stock, so the other thousand we did in blue.

MICHAEL doesn't answer because --

IN HIS HAND

A BOOKLET. A bright red plastic cover. The title:

SUMMONS TO CONQUEST

And when he flips it open. There it is, the by-now-familiar UNITED-NORTHFIELD MEMO #229 in all it's ugly splendor.

MICHAEL reading the memo. Lost in it. As we watch the realization take shape -- how dangerous...how sensitive... how threatening these few sheets of paper must be.

COPY KID
(Michael still reading)
It's okay, right?

MICHAEL looks up. Dazed.

MICHAEL
What? Yeah. It's fine.

COPY KID
You got a van or...
(sensing confusion)
There's like ten boxes.

MICHAEL
Right.
(forcing himself to rally here--)
Look, I'll tell you what...
(finding his wallet)
I'll give you fifty bucks to keep the rest till the end of the week.

COPY KID smiles. Sure. MICHAEL grabbing that one box on the counter. Turning away to exit and --

IKER standing there. Next in line. Watching him go --

165 EXT. SIXTH AVENUE -- DAY 165

DON JEFFRIES walking with Karen's two assistants, MAUDE and TODD and several AGTEK EXECUTIVES toward the Kenner, Bach & Ledeen offices. KAREN on a phone call, falling behind --

KAREN
(calling to the group)
Don!
(he turns back)
You guys go ahead. I'll catch up.

And they do. And KAREN stops there. But now she's lowering the phone --

166 EXT. KAREN'S POV/ACROSS THE PLAZA -- DAY (CONT) 166

VERNE waiting. Watching her come. Not a happy reunion.

KAREN
What are you doing here? You were leaving...

VERNE
Do you know Michael Clayton?

KAREN
From the... Yes. Why?

VERNE
We have a situation.

He hands her A RED COVERED BOOKLET. Calmly checking the perimeter as she opens it and --

167 INT. LAW FIRM/SENIOR PARTNERS HALLWAY -- DAY 167

ANOTHER RED BOOKLET. This one in MICHAEL'S HAND. This one in motion because he's walking and --

WE'RE TRACKING WITH HIM

Power central. Normally it's quiet and subdued up here, but the combination of Arthur's death the night before and the sudden paroxysm of activity on the Agtek settlement seems to have drawn a crowd. MICHAEL heading briskly for the central reception atrium, passing ATTORNEYS and SUPPORT STAFF clustered along the way. There's A WEEPY GROUP bunched near Arthur's office and --

ATTORNEY #1
(as Michael goes by)
Did they find you?

MICHAEL
Who?

ATTORNEY #1
Marty.
(pointing around the corner and--)
I don't think they went down yet...

MICHAEL moving around the corner and into --

168 INT. SENIOR PARTNER'S RECEPTION AREA -- DAY (CONT) 168

THIRTY PEOPLE -- ASSOCIATES, SUPPORT PEOPLE, ATTORNEYS -- scrambling over STACKS OF PRESENTATION DOCUMENTS -- this stuff was supposed to be ready for the U/North meeting and there's been some sort of clerical fuck up. So now there's twenty-five opinions on how to fix it and fifteen conversations going and nine cell phones ringing and six people on their knees going through the pages and --

BARRY
(on a mobile phone in the middle of it all--)
-- so either we cap the interest on the primary trust or somebody figures out how to split the custody fees --
(spotting Michael)
-- the audit's mandatory, right? --
(covering the phone, calling back over his shoulder--)
-- Marty! --
(then the phone--)
-- no, just hang on --
(then to Michael--)
-- he's been looking for you --
(then back to the phone, as--)

MICHAEL crosses the chaos to the elevator bank and --

MARTY
Your phone is off. There's too much going on for your phone to be off.

MICHAEL
I need a minute.

MARTY
(impatient, tired)
Yeah well, now we're late, so...

MICHAEL
We never got to finish last night.

MARTY
What'd you do? Close the place?
You look like hell.

MICHAEL
I left right after you did.

MARTY
If you say so.
(checking his watch)
We've been here all night. We had
to make an announcement.
(turning now--)
Jean! Jeannie!
(calling to his Assistant
across the way--)
Where's the thing? The envelope?
(back to Michael)
So I wanted your input, but I couldn't
get you and I had to pull the trigger.
I put Bob Nast and Kim -- which is
probably a mistake -- they're gonna try
to pull together a memorial service by
the end of the week. I told them to
call you if they need help, okay?
(distracted now because
Jean's holding something
up for him to see--)
-- no, no, the other one --
(back to Michael)
So we cut a check for you this
morning, but there's some strings
attached. And Barry, there's no way
around it, he's got to be involved.

MICHAEL
What if Arthur was onto something?

MARTY
What do you mean? Onto what?

MICHAEL hesitating because here's JEAN, tapping her watch for MARTY to hurry up as she hands him A SMALL GRAY ENVELOPE --

MICHAEL
U/North. What if Arthur wasn't just
crazy? What if he was right?

MARTY
Right that what? That we were on the wrong side?

MICHAEL
Wrong side. Wrong way. All of it.

MARTY
This is news? We're defending cancer for crissake. The case reeked from Day One. Fifteen years in, I've got to tell you how we pay the rent?

MICHAEL
What would they do, though, if they thought Arthur was gonna go public?

MARTY
What would they do? Are you fucking soft? They're doing it!
(honestly incredulous)
We don't straighten this settlement out in the next twenty-four hours, they're gonna withhold nine million dollars in fees they owe us. Then they're gonna pull out the video of Arthur's flashdance in Milwaukee and sue us for legal malpractice, except there won't be anything to win because by that point the merger with London will be dead and we'll be selling off the furniture.
(handing Michael the envelope now--)
That's eighty. We're calling it a bonus. You're getting a three year contract at your current numbers. That's assuming this all works out.

And now, before MICHAEL can get his footing, here comes --

BARRY
(the envelope)
You're doing this <u>now</u>?

MARTY
(the documents)
Are they ready?

BARRY
Almost. They're proofing.
(to Michael))
Look, I agreed to this, okay?
(MORE)

BARRY (cont'd)
But there's rules now. You want the contract, you're signing a confidentiality agreement and it's gonna be retroactive and it's gonna be bulletproof. Because Marty's too nice to say it, but with everything you know about this place and the clients and the people who work here, it makes things just a little too weird when you come in and ask for eighty grand.

A nasty beat. MICHAEL stung. Roiling.

MICHAEL
If I was gonna shake anybody down, Barry, I'd come right to you. And it wouldn't be for eighty grand.
(to Marty)
Is this him or you?

BARRY
Hey, if I'm wrong, I apologize.

MICHAEL
You're wrong. You're way-the-fuck wrong.

BARRY
So there you go.

MARTY
Enough. Okay? Everybody.
(to Michael)
He's an asshole. But he knows it.
(to Barry)
And you're on the record. Okay?
(to both)
Everybody happy?

Nobody's happy. And here's JEAN with a nudge --

JEAN
Don Jeffries is in the conference room...

MARTY
Okay, we're coming...
(to Barry)
Tell them to bring the paperwork down when they're ready.
(to Michael)
Call Bob Nast, just see if they need help with this thing...
(MORE)

MARTY (cont'd)
(starting to walk away, then he stops, turns back--)
You're welcome.

MICHAEL standing there, with THE ENVELOPE in one hand and THE RED BOOKLET in the other. Standing there watching MARTY and BARRY hustle away. All the power, all the oxygen, leaving with them. The moment passing, as --

169 INT. LAW FIRM ELEVATOR -- DAY 169

Minutes later. Crowded. MICHAEL, looking shaky, fleeing the office. And the door opens and --

170 INT. BUILDING LOBBY -- DAY (CONT) 170

MICHAEL stepping off the elevator. KAREN only a few feet away. She's waiting to step onto another elevator car that's also arrived. They pass within a yards of each other. Both of them wrapped so tight just now they never even know it.

171 EXT. "TIM'S" -- NIGHT 171

Dark and forlorn. As we hear --

VERNE (OVER)
Lexus puts this little tag...

IKER (OVER)
...yeah, they shield that cable...

172 INT. THE TAURUS -- NIGHT (CONT) 172

Parked down the block. IKER on the driver's side. VERNE beside him, holding a schematic drawing. Several bags and boxes in the back and --

VERNE
...there's room here for the kel...
(the schematic)
...once you tap into his GPS just make sure it's flush, we're packing the charge in the backseat armrest

IKER
Can I see it?
(Verne opens the box, very carefully--)
Could you make it any uglier?

VERNE
It's a work of art.

IKER
Who makes this?

VERNE
Russian mafia. Albanians trying to look like Russian mafia. It's as far from the other thing as we can get.

IKER nods. VERNE carefully taking the box back.

173 INT. "TIM'S" BAR/DINING ROOM -- NIGHT 173

MICHAEL sitting on the bar watching ZABEL open a bank envelope. Just the two of them.

ZABEL
You said twelve...
(check in hand)
This is seventy-five.

MICHAEL
Don't get too excited.
(a bottle of vodka))
You want a drink?

ZABEL
I'm working.
(watching Michael serve himself)
So we're square then. No bad blood.

MICHAEL
Just doing your job, right?

ZABEL
That's it.

MICHAEL
Everybody's got a job to do.

ZABEL
Like it or not, right?

MICHAEL
Like it or not.

ZABEL walks. MICHAEL alone in the dark, dead bar.

174 INT. CHINATOWN CARD ROOM -- NIGHT 174

A basement hideaway on a slow night. We're back where we started. MICHAEL at the table with THE PLUMBER, THE DEALER and THE TWO OTHER PLAYERS.

MICHAEL
Check.

PLAYER #2
I go like that. Check.

THE PLUMBER starting to peel bills off his flashroll, as --

175 EXT. DOYERS ST. -- NIGHT 175

Chinatown late. Cold. Quiet. IKER walking up to THE LEXUS. He's holding a remote unit. Pressing it once. Nothing. Again. Nothing. Third time's the charm. Lights flashing as the alarm disables and --

176 INT. LAW FIRM LADIES ROOM TOILET STALL -- NIGHT 176

KAREN BAUER -- exactly where we first met her -- sitting fully dressed on the john. Hiding here. Trying to fight off a panic attack using a breathing exercise she read about in an airline magazine. Losing the battle, as --

177 INT. CHINATOWN CARD ROOM -- NIGHT 177

MICHAEL anteing for the next hand --

PLUMBER
So your bar, what happened? Just had to be in show biz, right?

178 INT. THE TAURUS -- NIGHT 178

Parked just down the block from the card room. VERNE at the wheel. Eyes scanning. Operational energy.

179 INT. THE LEXUS -- NIGHT (CONT) 179

IKER hard at it -- something not fitting under the dashboard -- he's struggling -- sweating -- bingo -- he's got it --

180 INT. CHINATOWN CARD ROOM -- NIGHT 180

MICHAEL away from the table now, over by the metal detector. He's just pulled his pager out of the shitty plastic basket, trying to read the message and --

PLUMBER
(from the table)
What're you doing? You just got here.

MICHAEL starts putting stuff into his pockets and --

PLUMBER
Guy plays nine hands and walks away?
What'd I do? I scare you away?

181 INT. THE LEXUS -- NIGHT 181

IKER into the backseat now -- cutting open the armrest --

182 INT. CHINATOWN FREIGHT ELEVATOR -- NIGHT 182

Ascending. MICHAEL leaving in a hurry. Strapping on his Rolex, trying to read the pager and --

183 INT. THE LEXUS -- NIGHT 183

IKER -- he's a machine -- pulling the bomb from a bag -- one hand wedging open the hole he's cut in the armrest -- trying to get the thing in there and --

184 INT. CHINATOWN CARD ROOM HALLWAY -- NIGHT 184

A DOORMAN waiting as MICHAEL steps off the elevator and --

185 INT. THE TAURUS -- NIGHT 185

VERNE -- seeing MICHAEL -- grabbing the radio --

VERNE
-- abort! -- abort! -- he's out --
he's on route -- abort! --

186 INT. THE LEXUS -- NIGHT 186

IKER -- not quite done -- fuck -- slapping the armrest back into place and --

187 EXT. PELL ST./CHINATOWN -- NIGHT 187

MICHAEL on the street -- on the phone -- heading up the block toward Doyers Street and the Lexus --

MICHAEL
(walk and talk)
Walter?

WALTER (PHONE/OVER)
"Michael -- thank God, there you are.
I have a problem -- big problem --"

188 INT. THE LEXUS -- NIGHT 188

IKER -- closing up shop -- grabbing his supplies -- fast --

VERNE (RADIO/OVER)
"-- get out of there! --"

189 EXT. PELL ST./CHINATOWN -- NIGHT 189

MICHAEL still on the phone -- on the way --

MICHAEL
-- just now?

WALTER (PHONE/OVER)
"-- I don't know -- ten, fifteen minutes ago -- he was driving home --"

190 EXT. DOYERS ST. -- NIGHT 190

IKER out of THE LEXUS -- closing the door -- hitting his remote unit -- lights flashing as the alarm goes on and --

191 EXT. CORNER OF PELL AND DOYERS -- NIGHT 191

MICHAEL just turning onto Doyers Street -- pulling his remote security pendant and --

WALTER (PHONE/OVER)
"-- he didn't kill him -- he saw him get up -- *try* to get up --"

UP THE STREET -- THE LEXUS -- lights flashing as the alarm disables and --

MICHAEL
-- is he drunk?

WALTER
"--no that's the first thing I asked him -- no, he's sober-- "

192 INT. THE TAURUS -- NIGHT 192

VERNE firing up the engine and --

193 EXT. CHINATOWN -- NIGHT 193

IKER walking away toward Canal Street and --

194 INT. THE LEXUS -- NIGHT 194

MICHAEL jamming the car into gear -- peeling out into the street and --

195 EXT. CHINATOWN -- NIGHT 195

IKER turning as THE LEXUS goes flying past -- just making the light -- squirting out onto Canal Street and --

196 INT. THE TAURUS -- NIGHT 196

VERNE skidding THE TAURUS to a stop -- door flying open -- IKER jumping in beside him -- and they're off again --

VERNE
-- are we good? --

IKER
-- it's in -- I don't know -- I had no time -- I couldn't check it --

VERNE
-- where the hell's he going? -- get that laptop up -- find him --

197 EXT. WEST SIDE HIGHWAY -- NIGHT 197

THE LEXUS speeding North --

198 INT. THE LEXUS -- NIGHT 198

MICHAEL trying to drive and mess with the GPS UNIT on his dashboard. Something's wrong with it. He's tapping on it and THE SCREEN is flickering on and off... Fuck it. He slaps the GPS away -- steps on the gas and --

199 EXT. THE WEST SIDE HIGHWAY -- NIGHT 199

THE TAURUS in pursuit --

200 INT. THE TAURUS -- NIGHT 200

VERNE driving. IKER working A LAPTOP COMPUTER --

IKER
(tapping on the keyboard)
-- it's his GPS -- it's in and out -- he's up there somewhere --

VERNE
Good news is he's heading out of town.

201 EXT. WEST SIDE HIGHWAY -- NIGHT 201

THE LEXUS racing North toward the bridge, as we --

DISSOLVE TO

202 EXT. WESTCHESTER MANSION DRIVEWAY -- NIGHT/PRE-DAWN 202

THE WESTCHESTER MANSION DRIVEWAY. Four hours later. Just before dawn. MICHAEL leaning against the Lexus, munching on the stale baguette that's been in his car since Saturday. Looking over as --

JERRY DANTE comes walking out of the house.

JERRY
He's changing his shirt...
(pulling a cigarette as he wanders over--))
I talked to my guy at the State Police barracks. Better we go over there and surrender and they can tell the town cops to kiss off.
(lighting up, as--)

203 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD -- NIGHT/PRE-DAWN 203

THE TAURUS parked on the shoulder of that quiet two-lane outside the mansion gates. The hood is up. VERNE standing there pretending that something's wrong with the motor and --

204 INT. THE TAURUS -- NIGHT/PRE-DAWN (CONT) 204

IKER staring at his laptop, when suddenly --

IKER
We got power -- it's on! -- it just went on! --

VERNE slamming the hood shut -- rushing around --

VERNE
Let's make sure he's alone.

205 EXT. MANSION DRIVEWAY/COUNTRY ROAD -- NIGHT/PRE-DAWN 205

THE LEXUS speeding away from the house --

206 INT. THE TAURUS -- NIGHT/PRE-DAWN 206

VERNE and IKER not quite ready -- THE LEXUS tearing ass out into the road -- speeding off in the *other* direction and --

VERNE
Fuck!

IKER
I couldn't see -- did you see? --

VERNE
He went the wrong way!

IKER
Go! -- go! --

207 EXT. WESTCHESTER COUNTRY ROAD -- NIGHT/PRE-DAWN 207

THE LEXUS racing along.

208 INT. THE LEXUS -- NIGHT/PRE-DAWN 208

MICHAEL escaping. Driving wild. And this time around we know what's in his head. Definitely running from more than Mr. Greer and Jerry Dante.

209 INT. THE TAURUS -- NIGHT/PRE-DAWN 209

VERNE driving hard. IKER directing off the laptop screen --

IKER
-- right -- he took a right! --

VERNE
-- which one -- there's --

IKER
-- now he's --

VERNE
-- which right? --

210 INT. THE LEXUS -- NIGHT/PRE-DAWN 210

MICHAEL -- turning again -- aimless -- windows open -- cold air whipping through -- braking suddenly -- impulsive -- turning -- suddenly -- faster now and --

211 INT. THE TAURUS -- NIGHT/PRE-DAWN 211

Mounting panic. Military style.

IKER
-- I don't know -- it's a left --

VERNE
-- I don't have a left! --

IKER
-- turn -- turn -- turn around! --

VERNE slamming on the brakes and --

212 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD/THE FIELD -- DAWN 212

THE LEXUS skidding to a stop.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

THE HUGE OPEN PASTURE. Surrounded by forest. The sun just starting to rise. Cold mist hanging over the whole valley. Nothing but gray and green. Stark. Perfect.

213 INT. THE TAURUS -- DAWN 213

VERNE and IKER are lost. All systems failing.

IKER
(pointing at the screen)
-- he's stopped --

VERNE
-- where? --

IKER
-- I don't know -- we're close --
I've got signal, but --

VERNE
-- let me see it --

214 EXT. THE FIELD -- DAWN 214

MICHAEL out of the car. Jumping the fence. Walking into the field. Behind him, the Lexus with the engine running.

THE THREE HORSES poised at the crest of the pasture. Hanging in the fog like ghosts. Watching MICHAEL come toward them.

MICHAEL'S FACE as he walks. Everything that's happened writ large in these eyes. Everything he's done wrong. All the things he hasn't done. Wounded and weary and humbled by the abundance of his inadequacies. It is to weep...

And finally he stops. Just standing there.

215 INT. THE TAURUS -- DAWN 215

Still stopped there where we left them. VERNE now with the laptop -- IKER scanning out the window --

VERNE
-- we're on the other side --

IKER
-- we went past it --

VERNE
-- it's just over this hill --

IKER
-- but he's stopped --

VERNE
-- gimme the box -- give it! --

216 EXT. THE FIELD -- DAWN 216

MICHAEL standing there. The horses. The fog. The woods.

THE LEXUS EXPLODES!

THE HORSES already running before MICHAEL can turn back -- pieces of the car that have been blown into the sky still raining down before he's fully grasped what's happening --

MICHAEL simply shocked. Senseless. Standing there frozen. Stunned. The car -- his car -- is gone -- replaced by a skeletal shell of fire -- smoke pluming -- little follow-up explosions popping every couple seconds. MICHAEL looks around. Looks back. He should be dead. He is not.

And now, as the reality of that sinks in, as the smell of burning car finally reaches him, we can see the confusion drain away. All that staggered chaos in Michael's eyes suddenly replaced with steel. He should be dead. He is not.

And now he's walking. Toward the car.

Walking faster. Determined.

He starts running -- running toward the fire and --

217 EXT. THE NEARBY ROAD -- DAWN 217

THE PARKED TAURUS. VERNE and IKER standing there --

218 EXT. THEIR POV -- DAWN 218

CLOUD OF SMOKE rising over the hill just in front of them. Thick black smoke wafting up above the fog, as --

219 INT. THE LAW FIRM CONFERENCE ROOM -- DAY 219

FORTY PEOPLE -- ATTORNEYS -- ASSISTANTS -- PARALEGALS -- ACCOUNTANTS -- KAREN -- MARTY -- DON JEFFRIES -- all sitting absolutely silent amidst the debris of an eighteen hour work session. ALL EYES ON --

BARRY hunched over a phone. Listening and listening and...

BARRY
(finally)
I'll tell him....of course...you too...I'll check back.

And now he's hanging up the phone. Turning to the room.

BARRY
We have a deal.

A beat. And then someone starts to clap. And someone else. And then they're all APPLAUDING -- MARTY -- DON JEFFRIES -- BARRY -- happy warriors all -- and as the backslapping and smiles keep building

THE CAMERA FINDS

KAREN hesitating. But only a moment. Because it's easier then to join the party than not. Smiling now. Her tight smile. But is she letting it in, or forcing it out?

220 EXT. WESTCHESTER STRIP MALL PARKING LOT -- DAY 220

A beat-to-shit Chevy Caprice rumbles into the lot. Stops there. MICHAEL walking from a pay phone. He's wearing new sneakers, new parka, knit hat pulled low. Getting in and --

221 INT. THE CAPRICE -- DAY (CONT) 221

TIMMY behind the wheel. Quiet. Tentative.

MICHAEL
Just get me out of here.

TIMMY hesitates. MICHAEL looks over.

MICHAEL
What?

TIMMY
Thanks, Mick.

MICHAEL nods. But that's it. Eyes straight ahead as they drive away in silence, and --

222 INT. LAW FIRM MINI-CONFERENCE ROOM -- DAY 222

Glass box. BRINI, JEFF GAFFNEY, and TWO ASSOCIATES in the middle of a meeting. Looking over as --

PARTNER
(at the door)
Did you hear?

GAFFNEY
Yeah, they closed U/North.

PARTNER
No, about Michael Clayton...

GAFFNEY
What?

PARTNER
Car bomb. Upstate. This morning.
He was killed.

GAFFNEY
What?

Someone in the hallway, calling THE PARTNER away from the door and GAFFNEY rushing out to join the conversation and --

FIRST ASSOCIATE
Holy shit...

SECOND ASSOCIATE
Who's Michael Clayton?
(turning to--)

BRINI. But she won't answer. Imploding. Holding herself. Hand to her mouth. Pressing back against the tears that are coming no matter what she does, as we --

223 INT. NEW YORK HOTEL BATHROOM -- DAY 223

KAREN at the mirror. Still wet from the shower --

KAREN
...there had been a series of overtures
from the plaintiffs dating back...
(trying it again)
Over the past several months we'd
gotten word that the plaintiffs were
considering settlement numbers...

224 INT. NEW YORK HOTEL GRAND BALLROOM -- DAY 224

A rushed meeting. THIRTY PEOPLE -- U/NORTH BOARDMEMBERS and PRIMARY STOCKHOLDERS -- seated in a room that could hold three hundred. Everyone has an information packet and a copy of the lawsuit deal memo. SECURITY GUARDS manning the door. And up front, addressing the assembled --

KAREN
(smiling and confident)
-- we'd also discovered that their
(MORE)

KAREN (cont'd)
legal fees were capped at thirty-two percent of the judgement up to four hundred million, and dropped to twenty-four percent after that, so we knew there was this motivational dead zone in the middle for them...

225 INT. NEW YORK HOTEL BEDROOM -- DAY 225

KAREN trying to choose a suit --

KAREN
...it was also at this time that...
(reset)
We had a meeting in June with the finance team and...
(try again)
We were informed by our finance team, last June that they'd run the numbers and that the benefits...

226 INT. NEW YORK HOTEL GRAND BALLROOM -- DAY 226

They're eating out of her hand.

KAREN
...that the tax benefit -- if we could keep the settlement under six-hundred million and get it done this fiscal year -- that the write-off would essentially pay for itself.

227 INT. NEW YORK HOTEL BATHROOM -- DAY 227

KAREN at the mirror putting on makeup.

KAREN
We've negotiated...requested...we...
(catching her reflection and almost losing it for a moment--)

228 INT. NEW YORK HOTEL GRAND BALLROOM -- DAY 228

THE BALLROOM. She's rolling now --

KAREN
We have insisted that Kenner, Bach & Ledeen cap it's fee at fifty million and we anticipate no further legal fees in the closing of this settlement.
(pausing for triumph)
The package you have before you represents, in my judgement, the very
(MORE)

KAREN (cont'd)
strongest possible position for our company under the circumstances. As Chief Counsel it is my recommendation that the proposal be confirmed.

And she's done. And it's gone very, very well. Many happy prosperous faces.

DON JEFFRIES
Thank you, Karen.
(taking over now)
If you could just give us a few minutes to talk it over...

KAREN
(with a smile))
I'll be right outside.

229 EXT. HOTEL BALLROOM FOYER -- DAY 229

The big, weird hub of three different huge reception rooms. Wall-to-wall carpet. Chairs stacked in distant corners. Empty. KAREN walking off her excitement. Standing there.

Catching her reflection in a wall of mirrors.

And then...

MICHAEL (OS)
How'd it go?

She turns. Stops. Blinks. Freezes.

MICHAEL
Pretty freaky, huh?
(he's coming toward her)
You see Arthur? He's hanging around here somewhere...

She's just paralyzed. He's carrying one of those copy-shop boxes.

MICHAEL
Hey, I'm kidding...
(he smiles)
C'mon. Lighten up.

He drops the box. Pulls out a RED-COVERED BOOKLET.

MICHAEL
You have one of these?
(offering it)
Great memo. An oldie but a goodie.
(MORE)

MICHAEL (cont'd)
(she doesn't move)
Got your heart racing, don't I?

KAREN
I don't know what you think you're doing...

MICHAEL
What do you think I'm doing?

KAREN
The suit is over. We have a deal. This...
(the memo)
Whatever this is, it's meaningless at this point.

MICHAEL
You think?
(so enjoying this)
I must've gotten it wrong. I heard you had a tentative proposal. I didn't realize you'd written all those checks already. What a drag...
(the box)
I've got thousands of these things, what the hell am I gonna do?

KAREN
I'm calling Marty...

MICHAEL
Do it. Call him. That's a great place to start. Let's find out who told him Arthur was calling Anna Kysersun. Let's find out who tapped those phones.

KAREN
...this...this memorandum...even if it were authentic -- which I doubt -- I highly doubt...

MICHAEL
I know what you did to Arthur.

KAREN
...even if it was, it would belong to Agtek, it would be protected...

MICHAEL
I know you killed him.

KAREN
...this is a cut-and-dried case of attorney-client privilege!

MICHAEL
See that's just...
(here comes the steam)
That's just not the way to go here, Karen. For such a smart person, you're lost, aren't you? You've got the moves, but you don't hear the music.

KAREN
(backing away)
...this conversation...this is over.

MICHAEL
I'm not a guy you kill! I'm the guy you buy!
(that stops her cold)
Are you so fucking blind you don't see what I am? I'm the easiest part of your whole problem and you try and kill me? Don't you know who I am? I'm a fixer! I'm a bagman! I do everything from shoplifting wives to bent congressmen and you're gonna blow me up? What do you need, Karen? Lay it on me. You want a carry permit? Need a heads-up on an insider trading subpoena? Need someone's name erased from an escort service list? Got a rich kid busted for dope? Somebody beat up their mistress?
(wide open)
I sold out Arthur for eighty grand and a three-year contract and you're gonna kill me?

KAREN
(barely)
What do you want?

MICHAEL
What do I want? I want more. I want out! And now, with this.....
(the memo)
I want everything.

KAREN
Is there a number?

MICHAEL
Ten is the number.

KAREN
Ten what? Ten million?
(incredulous)
Where do you think I can get ten million dollars?

MICHAEL
You know what's so great about this?
(the memo)
Did you read to the end? You see who signed it? Let's go in that ballroom and ask Don Jeffries if he wants to pass the hat for a worthy cause.

KAREN is reeling. She can hardly breathe

KAREN
This...it would have to be a longer conversation...and someplace else...

MICHAEL
Where? My car?
(on her hard now)
Let's make it easy. Let's call it five to forget about Arthur's murder.

KAREN
Five is easier.
(hopeful for a moment)
That would be something that we might be able to do. Five could work.

MICHAEL
Great. And the other five million is to forget about the four-hundred-and-sixty-eight people who got wiped out by your weedkiller.

KAREN
Let me finish this meeting. Let me talk to Don. Let me...

MICHAEL
Do I look like I'm negotiating?

Across the room -- THE DOOR TO THE BALLROOM OPENS and --

DON JEFFRIES
(all smiles)
Karen...

KAREN
(over her shoulder)
One second.

DON JEFFRIES
(stepping out)
...everything okay?

KAREN
(to Michael)
Yes.

MICHAEL
Ten million. Off shore. Bank of my choosing. Immediately.

KAREN
Yes.

MICHAEL
Say it.

KAREN
Ten million dollars. Your bank. As soon as this meeting is over.

MICHAEL hesitates. She's serious. It's his. Ten million.

DON JEFFRIES
(insistent now)
Karen, everyone's waiting...

KAREN
I'm coming!
(back to Michael--)
So you...I'll just...we...

MICHAEL
You're so fucked.

KAREN
Excuse me?

MICHAEL
You're fucked. It's over.
(his pocket, his phone, flipped open, like it's on--)

KAREN
What do you mean?

MICHAEL
Take a wild guess.

DON JEFFRIES
(coming toward them)
Is there a problem?

KAREN
I don't understand...

MICHAEL
(the phone)
Want me to take a picture while I'm at it?

KAREN
(small and faraway)
You don't want the money...?

MICHAEL
Keep it. You're gonna need it.

DON JEFFRIES
Is this fellow bothering you?

MICHAEL
(to Karen)
I think I'll let you tell him.

She can't make sense -- swamped -- lost --

DON JEFFRIES
Karen, I've got the whole board sitting in there. What the hell is going on?
(wheeling on Michael)
Who are you?

MICHAEL
I'm Shiva the God of Death.

MICHAEL starting to walk away and --

DON JEFFRIES
Ron! Ronny!
(yelling back toward the ballroom--)
I need security out here immediately.
(turning because--)

PADILLA and TWO OTHER DETECTIVES are coming quickly from one of the distant empty ballrooms and --

DON JEFFRIES
Here we go...
(thinking they're part of his team--)
That guy, right there -- stop him -- grab that guy!
(but they don't)
What're you doing?
(totally confused now because--)

TWO SECURITY GUARDS are jogging out of the ballroom and --

PADILLA
Slow down, guys...
(flashing his badge)
Police Department. N.Y.P.D.

DON JEFFRIES
What?

KAREN just drifting to the floor and --

MICHAEL walking away. Leaving chaos in his wake.

There's DON JEFFRIES still carrying on and PADILLA trying to calm him down.

U/NORTH BOARDMEMBERS spilling out of the ballroom to see what's going on.

KAREN sitting there on the floor in shock like some sort of accident victim.

FINALLY

GENE waiting by the exit. Watching MICHAEL come toward him. Headphones around his neck make it clear he's been listening to the whole thing.

GENE
You okay?

They trade a look. MICHAEL has just torn off his skin. Naked to the world.

MICHAEL
I need some air.

GENE
Sure, just...stay close.

MICHAEL nods. Walking away, as we --

230 **EXT. SIXTH AVENUE -- DAY** 230

Rush hour. MICHAEL walking -- walking toward the park -- walking through the sea of people and faces, as we begin to hear the crazed, manic voice of --

ARTHUR EDENS (V.O.)
Michael. Look at me, Michael. Look at me and make believe. Make believe it's not just madness. Because it's not just madness...

TAIL CREDITS begin --

ARTHUR EDENS (V.O.)
...I mean, yes -- okay, yes -- elements of madness -- the speed of madness -- yes, the occasional, euphoric, pseudo-hallucinatory moments that, yes -- fine -- agreed -- distracting -- nostalgic -- all of that -- but that's just the package -- the plate -- think of it as a tax -- The Mania Tax -- The Insanity Tax -- or like advertising on TV -- it's the freight -- the weight -- it's the price of the show...

As we fade out and...

THE END